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THE NEW
STATESMAN
AND NATION
The Week-end Review

Vol. XXXIV. No. 867. [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1947 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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THE WRITING ON THE WALL

WHILE President Truman fiddles with ineffectual schemes to persuade America to eat less meat on Tuesday and fewer eggs on Thursday, the U.S. State Department conducts a desperate search for short-term expedients to prevent France and Italy—the two countries strategically most important for America's conception of European rehabilitation—being engulfed by economic chaos before Congress can be expected to give formal approval even to selective, interim aid to European countries. The discovery, however, of such devices as the release to France and Italy of gold stolen during the war by Germany and Japan, and the grant of permission to France to utilise for purchases of food and coal a modest dollar credit given originally for the financing of imports of capital goods, is of small account in comparison with disquieting signs that the whole Marshall project is running hopelessly aground on the shoals of American domestic politics.

The chances of an early special session of Congress appear to be growing still more remote in the confusion of partisan voices—some arguing that America is being asked to finance un-American ways of life with good American dollars, others that the European market is not essential to the United States, and still others that aid programmes would raise American prices. Sight is being completely lost of the imaginative and constructive ideas which seemed to lie behind Mr. Marshall's original speech at Harvard. Governor Dewey maintains that American health must come before "thoughtless generosity." John Taber, chairman of the House Finance Committee, finds Europeans looking plump. Mr. Stassen reiterates that no aid must go to countries with nationalisation programmes. Mr. Harriman, speaking at Chicago, made it clear that even the Administration concedes that the Marshall "line" is to be abandoned in favour of a return to the Truman Doctrine of "firm containment of Russia." If we are to credit reports from Washington that the Paris Conference may be asked to assemble afresh and to re-write its whole Report on lines likely to be more acceptable to Congressional opinion, there will be, at best, lamentable delays before anything is done either by the United States to assist Europe or by the countries of Western Europe to assist each other.

Yet famine waits for no man's pleasure—not even that of the Congressional Committees whose members have been surveying Europe with critical eyes. Outside Russia and the Danubian basin, the 1947 harvests of bread-grain (wheat and rye) in Europe are 25 per cent below the level of last year's crops, and represent little more than half the average pre-war production. The export surplus available from the U.S.S.R. is not precisely known, but is believed to be of the order of two million tons. Of this, well over one million tons will probably be required to meet the minimum needs of those deficit members of Russia's "co-prosperity sphere"—Czechoslovakia, Poland and Rumania—whose crops this year amounted in the aggregate to 750,000 tons less than a year ago. The balance may go some little way towards satisfying the requirements of France, Denmark and, perhaps, Italy. Even so, if they are to maintain only the semi-starvation bread rations of last winter, the countries of Western Europe plus Greece need 42 million tons of bread-grains before the next harvest. From their indigenous resources they should, on paper (if there is no serious hoarding by farmers), be able to provide 19 million tons, leaving a net deficit of 23 million tons.

Now, again on paper, the overseas grain exporting countries—the U.S.A., Canada, Argentina and Australia—are estimated to have an exportable surplus of 29 million tons. But, in considering this figure, various qualifications have to be borne in mind before the conclusion is drawn that Western Europe's needs can be met. First, wheat-rust and communal strife have played havoc in India, and there are grave deficiencies in the rice crops of South-East Asia. As a result, the minimum non-European need of bread-grain, if famine over large areas in the East is to be averted, amounts to 15 million tons, making a total world requirement of 38 million tons, or 9 million tons more than the maximum export surplus in sight. Secondly, it has to be remembered that, though the United States has had a record wheat crop, the maize crop has been a failure; and there is grave reason to fear that the feeding of wheat to animals by American farmers may necessitate a downward revision of the calculated U.S. export surplus. Finally, in the past summer's drought in Europe not merely wheat but also fodder and root crops have suffered. Hence winter feed for animals will be short; and, even if they could afford the dollars to import feeding stuffs, the world maize shortage rules out that possibility. Not only in the United States but in the deficit countries of Europe as well, there will be a powerful temptation for farmers and peasants to feed to animals the bread-grain needed for the hungry millions in the cities, who cannot even hope to rely on potatoes (of which there is also a shortage) to eke out lack of bread.

The writing on the wall is plain. If catastrophe is to be avoided, we must look mainly to the World Food Council which has now come into being and is due to meet at Washington in ten days' time. It will have to wrestle with the intractable problem of allocating insufficient resources between equally clamant needs. Even more important, it will have to determine the legislative and administrative measures which member governments must be asked to take to compel farmers to disgorge grain for human consumption instead of feeding it to animals. Lastly, it will have to devise and recommend much more positive steps than have yet been taken to limit consumption and use in grain in the chief producer countries, so that bigger surpluses may, if possible, be made available to bridge the looming gap of 9 million tons that lies between the deficit nations and the avoidance of famine.

Will the member governments, producers or consumers of grain, loyally carry out the World Food Council's behests? Many of the measures which it must recommend are bound to be politically difficult for governments—and particularly for democratic governments—to carry out. But the one hope that we see of finding a solution for the grim food crisis which confronts the world is for the Council's findings and recommendations to be accepted as having supra-national authority.

Palestine Concord

For once the Big Three seem to be in general agreement and there is a reasonable chance that Uno will at last complete a task that has been assigned to it. Between the Russian and American viewpoints on Palestine there is, as yet, substantially no difference, although there may be possible hitches on the delimitation of the boundaries. Both subscribe in general terms to the Majority Report of the Commission, and both regard the achievement of a solution as a matter of immediate urgency. If anyone seriously believed that American troops might march in when British troops marched out, the illusion was dispelled by Mr. Johnson's indication that the U.S.A. had no intention of dispatching military forces to Palestine, although the situation "might require the establishment of a special constabulary or police force recruited on a volunteer basis by the United Nations." This project of a joint Uno police force, presumably composed mainly of Powers with no special interests in the Middle East, would seem the best available solution. That so much agreement has already been reached is, of course, due to the shock of reality thrown into the deliberations by the threat of an early British withdrawal. Thus far the British Government deserves great credit, but their obligations do not end there. If the necessary two-thirds majority for partition is obtained in Uno, it is our responsibility, as we have also given our broad agreement to the recommendations of the Commission, to do what we can to implement such a solution. If we feel we cannot do it without assistance, we shall be entitled to call for the aid we need on the lines proposed by the U.S.A. Obviously a date for the termination of the Mandate must be fixed, and at that date the plan for withdrawal will have to be related to some actuality. In other words, some Government must be available to take over the authority relinquished by the British. It will not be reasonable when that time comes to decline the responsibility on the grounds that the plan is not acceptable to both the Arabs and the Jews; no plan can be devised that will be so acceptable. Nor need Britain incur any odium from either party to the dispute because she will merely be the agent of Uno, acting by herself if she is strong enough, or with Uno's assistance if she is not. The plan is not her plan but a Uno one, evolved by the successor of the League of Nations, as a method of ending the Mandate which Britain wants to give up. How far in the circumstances Arab threats are to be taken seriously, is not very certain; it is clear that the reports of war-like preparations by the Arabs contain at least an element of bluff. A "holy war," organised by Arab States in these circumstances would be war against the United Nations.

Programme for Parliament

Indications are that the King's Speech will contain no reference to the nationalisation of the steel industry, and that the legislative programme for the coming Session will consist—with the possible exception of a Bill to nationalise the gas industry—of relatively uncontentious measures of social reform, including Criminal Justice and the final winding up of the Poor Law. The case for shelving the Steel Bill is presumably that transfer of ownership might lead to a temporary disturbance of production at a time when maximum output is essential. Against this, quite apart from political considerations, there is the weighty argument that no scheme which Sir Stafford Cripps can devise for rationing steel supplies can be certain of achieving the desired results so long as the *types* of steel produced are settled ultimately by private ownerships. So far as Parliament is concerned, the absence of what the Opposition would consider to be partisan legislation will give fuller time for debates on the administrative measures which the Government has taken or will take to deal with the economic crisis. The first question on which the Commons are entitled to fuller information is whether the obscure statement issued this week with regard to releases from the Forces in the next six months means that the "crisis cut" of 80,000 which Mr. Attlee promised on August 6 is being improved on, or actually fulfilled.

I.T.O. and Mr. Morrison

It is obviously of importance to the American Government, if it wishes to sell the Marshall Plan to Congress, to be able to report agreement as the outcome of the Geneva tariff talks. It is no less obviously to our interest to get agreement, if we can do so without making our trade prospects worse than they are now. And it is to the Dominions' interest also to get agreement if they can—particularly Canada's; for they are all in the same boat with us about dollars. Until the exact terms are published, it is of course impossible to say whether we have gone too far in order to meet the Americans, or whether their further tariff concessions mean much or little. Judgment must be suspended, with the hope that the agreement has not exacted too much from our weakness in return for too little. The root difficulty of our position no trade agreements, however favourable, can remove; for it rests, as Mr. Morrison pointed out last Sunday at Smethwick, on the disparate movements of export and import prices since 1939. We are getting two and a quarter times as much for our exports; but we are paying two and three-quarters as much for what we buy from abroad. Mr. Morrison talked as "straight" as Sir Stafford Cripps about the austerities ahead of us. He defended—but with an undertone of doubt—the Government's action in not imposing them sooner, but rightly claimed that the Conservatives least of all have any title to criticise on that account. His speech, with no comfortable words in it, should serve to drive home further into people's minds what we have now to face. We have, as he said, "no choice"—none even if the Americans do in the end give us some further conditional help on terms that we can accept without disaster

Miners' Hours and Wages

The miners have still to ballot on the terms recommended last week by their National Conference; but, with all the leaders favourable, the result should not be in doubt. It will then be for the districts to decide for themselves whether to work a Saturday shift or to spread the temporary increase in working hours over the five days. The proposed conditions to be attached to overtime payments seem reasonable; and it is also reasonable to insist that if the one alternative is tried and fails to work, the other shall be resorted to. It is satisfactory that this vexed question seems at length to be settled; but how much coal has been lost through failures to settle it sooner? Now comes the fresh claim for a basic wage increase of £1 a week, with adjustments to preserve the relativity of earnings for the better-paid workers. The granting of this demand will by no means give the miner an extravagant wage in relation to his work. It will be money well spent, if only it improves recruitment and puts the miners in a good mood. It should be possible to prevent it from starting off a series of wage demands elsewhere: the main danger of that will come if any attempt is made by Mr. Dalton to cut the food subsidies in order to mop up surplus purchasing power. We see that the Co-operative Movement has issued a strongly worded manifesto saying that the subsidies must be left intact. We agree.

The Austrian Treaty

The failure of the "Commission of Experts" in Vienna to reach agreement on any of the disputed clauses of the Austrian Treaty has shown beyond any doubt that agreement is not being held up by technical difficulties, but simply by the failure of the Great Powers to reconcile their political objectives. The Russians are convinced that the Austrians cannot be kept out of the Anglo-American camp except by direct pressure. This can be exercised by a Treaty which places an important share of Austrian industry, as former German property, under Russian ownership. Otherwise they would prefer to have no Treaty at all, and continued Occupation. In the battle of legal formulæ, however, they have made a concession. Previously they had insisted that the only "German assets" which could be exempted from seizure as reparations were those which had been acquired without any compensation by "direct forcible action." This left as "German assets" many properties which had been "Aryanised" at derisory prices. They now agree to exempt properties for which compensation was paid, provided that the compensation had to be used to pay special taxes or other charges, as was the case with most sales of Jewish property. If the Foreign Ministers wanted to reach agreement, this concession might help to make it possible; and the French and Americans do seem to want a Treaty. The French, with American support, have suggested that the search for a definition of "German assets" should be abandoned and that the Austrians should make separate agreements with each of the Occupying Powers. These would involve handing over certain important undertakings such as the oil industry and the Danube Steamship Co. to the Occupying Power concerned, and valuing the remaining assets as an Austrian debt to be paid to each Occupying Power by the export of goods over a number of years. But the chances of agreement seem likely to be finally blocked by the British Foreign Office. The Russians can hope for a Treaty which will establish them as the economic masters of Austria. The Americans know that, Treaty or no Treaty, Austria cannot live without dollars. For Britain, it is argued, the position under a Treaty, involving the end of Occupation, must be worse than the present dispensation, which permits the maintenance of a base which is convenient for Central and Southern Europe and lines of communication in Italy.

The Indian States

The intensity of the riots in the Punjab has now diminished. They have ceased to infect whole localities with communal frenzy and become rather the sphere of professional thugs in search of plunder. This change in their character makes it easier for the authorities to prevent further outbreaks and justifies Nehru's hope that the corner has been turned. But no sooner is there a prospect of settling this problem than another issue—the respective positions of Junagadh and Kashmir—arises to endanger the relations of India and Pakistan. Junagadh is a small State in Kathiawar separated by land by some hundreds of miles from Pakistan. Eighty per cent. of its 800,000 inhabitants are Hindus, but its Moslem ruler has announced his intention of acceding to Pakistan. In answer to this, India has landed troops in the neighbouring Kathiawar States, and has declared that she will not recognise the accession. She has also proposed to Pakistan that a plebiscite be held as to the people's wishes. Pakistan has shown some inclination to consider this proposal favourably and, in view of events in Kashmir, undoubtedly emerges in a stronger position as a result of it. In Kashmir the predominantly Moslem population is badly and oppressively ruled by a Hindu, who has been hesitating on the brink of declaring for complete independence or for accession to India. Once the principle of plebiscites was admitted, Pakistan would stand to gain Kashmir, a huge State which possesses great untapped natural resources. India, in return, would only get the tiny State of Junagadh. This is a bargain to which Pakistan would presumably not be averse. It is now to be hoped that both governments will agree that accessions to either Dominion of States where the wishes of the people are in doubt should be settled by plebiscite, and that India will remove her troops from Kathiawar.

Racial Issues in America

Liberal protests in America against racial discrimination have been effective in strengthening the hands of the Northern city authorities against anti-Negro demonstrations by White mobs. In Chicago the city authorities refused to pursue a "lily-white" policy in allocating new houses to veterans. As a result, a mob attacked the houses let to Negroes, but were met by the largest police force Chicago (a city with some experience in violence) has ever called out. In Gary, thirty miles away in Indiana, the children demonstrated against Negroes being brought into their school, and their parents refused to allow them to return and risk contamination. By use of the truancy laws the Mayor, with the support of the C.I.O. Steelworkers' Union, forced the children to return to the school and mix on terms of equality with the Negro children. In St. Louis, the Catholic Archbishop threatened ex-communication against parents who, by keeping their children away from "mixed" schools, refused to recognise the equality before God of children of any colour. In the Southern States the courts have recently refused to accept closed "white" primaries for the Democratic party. An attempt is being made to get around this ruling by an education test which would be used to exclude Negroes from the poll, but that too faces a court test. Meanwhile in Mississippi, the Senate seat of the late unlamented Bilbo is being sought by the only other member of Congress who expressed equally violent views on White supremacy—Representative Rankin.

Indonesian Uncertainties

In the Security Council's debate on Indonesia, the Russians suggested that both sides should withdraw to the positions they held on the date of the cease-fire order. The Australians proposed the withdrawal of both sides to at least five kilometres behind the positions on that day. Col. Hodgson argued that this was more practical than the theoretically desirable proposal of Mr. Gromyko. The British resolution called for a line of demarcation somewhere between the Indonesian and Netherlands forces. The object was to ensure that both sides would observe the cease-fire order, and that the Three Power Committee, now on its way to Indonesia, should instruct the Consular Commission to work out proposals for the demarcation of such a line. Finally, the Council adjourned without reaching any decision. Meanwhile, in Indonesia the Dutch are realising the problems of quick military advance in a country where the people are hostile and determined to fight for their independence. Indonesian resistance increases and the Dutch troops are reported to be no more than half-hearted in a war which is fought on the old colonial pattern, and each day costs 8 million guilders and hundreds of sick and wounded.

Rival Broadcasters

What would have been said about the manners of Mr. Priestley if he had spoken of "a Mr. Churchill whom we used for broadcasting during the war," but who was not sufficiently representative of Britain to be taken seriously in the United States? Yet the gibe would have been at least as fair as Mr. Churchill's comment on Mr. Priestley. Mr. Churchill is no longer representative even of British Conservatism. Mr. Priestley, however, speaks for our generation more clearly than any other broadcaster, writer or dramatist, and his broadcasts in 1940 were of only less importance than Mr. Churchill's. Indeed, it is doubtful whether his Postscripts, hailed in the Dominion press as "worth an army," were not as important an inspiration in those dark days as Mr. Churchill's. We recall the bitter disappointment in the country when they abruptly ceased and we add a fact—fairly widely known at the time but not, we believe, hitherto published—that Mr. Priestley was taken off the air at the personal behest of Mr. Churchill

THE QUITE NEAR FUTURE ?

"AUSTERITY" Cripps, as the journalists still take pleasure in calling him, went some way at his first press conference last week towards telling the British people what is probably in store for them "in the quite near future." How many of them took him seriously, or even appreciated at all what his warning meant? It meant not only that in default of early American help we must expect shortages of an entirely different intensity from any we have experienced so far, but also—and much more seriously—that these shortages, so far from being temporary, look like being of such a kind as to act cumulatively, widening instead of narrowing the gap between our needs and our resources, and setting us sliding down a descending spiral. If we fail to narrow the gap quickly enough by other means, we shall be forced to close it abruptly by measures which will react disastrously on our productive power. We shall be able to buy too few foodstuffs to enable us to work well, and too few materials to keep ourselves working usefully even if we could work well. In effect, all Great Britain is threatened with becoming a distressed area, such as South Wales was.

We are putting this strongly, as we believe it needs to be put if most people are to be induced to take in the truth. We are not saying that this outcome is inevitable; nor do we think that it is. We do, however, believe that the peril is too great to be averted, in default of large-scale "charity," without a prodigious national effort—an effort which can be evoked by nothing short of a successful appeal to the mass-imagination of the people. A generally different sense of personal responsibility and vocation, as intense as that which followed the collapse of France in 1940, and more sustained, is now called for. The situation, though it requires planning of a high order at the centre, cannot be met by planning; it cannot be met except by the personal response of the great mass of individual citizens, and especially of the working class and the managers in all industries and services. It cannot be met if any really important section of the nation decides to pull the other way.

Go back in mind to the summer of 1940, when there came suddenly a mass realisation of the extreme peril of the nation. The peril was there long before, though much less visibly; then, quite suddenly, it came full into everyone's view and struck the mass-imagination of the people, so that they had an image of it always before them, not fitfully when they happened to be thinking of such things, but steadily, as looming over the entire field of vision. After that "finest hour" came a truly national effort; and it achieved a miracle. Another miracle is needed now; and for whole nations miracles depend on mass-imagination. They cannot be engineered: they must be also really inspired.

Last week Sir Stafford Cripps "jolted" the people; but he did not inspire them. That was not his fault; he had nothing so visible to show them as the fall of France and the evacuation from Dunkirk. There is nothing inspiring in the sight of dollars going down the drain, or in motorists mourning for their basic ration. What Sir Stafford did achieve was to jolt a large number of persons into realising how fully they had in their hearts been counting on American help, and to set them asking themselves in dismay what would happen to them if this help did not, after all, arrive. No sooner did they ask the question than they were forced to admit that help could by no means be counted upon. Most of us are coming to understand that this country is in fact a good way down the queue, at any rate for the immediate future. In American eyes we are neither so "needy" as France and Italy, nor so deserving; for we have committed the indiscretion of not having a Right-wing Government, and the Government we have is held to have laid unholy hands on private enterprise. It is curiously difficult to persuade even intelligent Americans that they are not, in some rather undefined sense, being asked to "pay for socialisation"—though in fact none of our socialisation measures can possibly have cost them a single dollar. If we are not utterly "bad boys," we are not good boys either, despite all that Mr. Bevin has done. Our penalty is to stand back in the queue until we have managed to satisfy American opinion that we are worthy of help on economic grounds as well as on account of our role in the American plan of world politics.

Perhaps, if it is the case that the trade talks between Great Britain and the United States have now practically produced agreement, this may have some effect on the American attitude. Until we know what exactly has been agreed to, we can tell neither whether this will be so, nor whether the agreement is a good thing, or consistent with our necessities. All may be well on the trade front; but clearly the danger is that, when the question of aid to Britain does get to Congress, we may be pushed from one concession to another until our hands are tied so that we can neither re-establish our trade position nor take the steps needed to reorganise our industries for efficient service in a planned structure of production and exchange.

There is also the danger that while we are being kept waiting for American help that may or may not come in the end, we may be inclined to use up a gold reserve which in equity belongs not to us alone but to all the members of the sterling group. We have already made some drafts on this reserve, and we shall no doubt make more; but we have no right at all to deplete this store except in meeting, on an agreed basis, the needs of the sterling area as a whole. To behave otherwise would be both wrong and foolish: it would cost us the goodwill of our best friends and customers who have deposited their balances with us in reliance on our honouring their claims. We must not allow the Americans to drive us into a unilateral using up of this reserve—not even if it means imposing severe austerity while we appear still to be able to stall it off.

In this situation, the whole people must somehow be made to realise both what we are up against and what grounds there are for hope that we can get the better of our present difficulties and resume our forward march. Surely this calls for much more effective and widespread publicity and propaganda than the Government has attempted hitherto. It is not enough for Ministers to make speeches or issue statements or hold press conferences and then leave the public and the press to make what they choose of the material they are given. A good part of the press and a good many of the publicists will be trying, not to rouse the people to a national effort, but to use the material for scoring party, or class, points off the Government; and the ordinary men and women whose efforts are needed will be bewildered instead of inspired. Surely the Government ought by means of posters, travelling exhibitions, and every device of propaganda that was used in the war effort, to be trying to bring home to the whole people not only the exact situation in which we stand, but also the steps needed for dealing with it—of course, adapting its appeals to local differences and needs, and above all getting right into the factories as it did with marked success during the war.

If people are to be really prepared, on the one hand, for more austerity and, on the other, for much more direction of labour than is being attempted so far, no ordinary methods will be enough. The conviction must be brought right home, in as many ways as there are different accessibilities to the right appeal, that the matter is one of life and death, for the individual and not merely for an abstraction called "the nation," and that there is a way through, albeit a hard way, even if little or no help is forthcoming, now or later, from the United States. Our chance of pulling through depends absolutely on the skill with which the Government not only plans and executes the right measures, but also succeeds in mobilising popular goodwill and sense of personal responsibility.

For—let us admit—the working classes, unless a good, clear case is put to them, will take to austerity and direction no more kindly than the middle classes have taken to the abolition of basic petrol and the continuance of controls. There is, however, this great difference. Nothing will convert the type of person who is clamouring for abundant petrol or "freedom" for himself at everybody else's expense. But the workers, given firm assurances that they are not being called upon to shoulder an unfair proportion of the burden, will listen to sense, if it is put to them in such a way that they are able to understand it with their imaginations as well as with their reason. That is how the Government must find means of putting the truth before them. It has at last got its economic director—Cripps. The next thing is to vitalise its publicity.

BAD CONSCIENCES IN THE RUHR

[By a Correspondent]

The announcement of the "firm" list of industrial plants to be dismantled and removed in the British Zone as reparations, war potential or surplus productive capacity, is now overdue. The list was expected to have been made public from Berlin on September 21st. According to the best reports at the time it would have included—and presumably may still include when it does come out—more than nine hundred plants. Most of these will be such long-condemned installations as the bomb-ruined Krupps main steelworks in Essen, where the work of adaptation to civilian productive purposes would be fully as difficult as building an entirely new plant. Other contents, however, are likely to be such modern and well-equipped factories as the Deutscher Edelstahlwerke at Krefeld. Here the German politicians and trade unionists are able to make a better case for retention, since in the past the prosperous Solingen cutlery business, most of whose products have always gone for export, largely depended on the plant in peacetime for fine rolled steel.

Granted, however, that the usually timorous military government has made up its mind to be cruel for once in order to be kind, and get the "level of capacity" business over for once and for all, its actions in postponing the announcement of the list present something of a puzzle. Control Commission officials here, who were warned just before September 21st to be ready to explain and defend the contents of the order when it came out, received no warning from Berlin that the date of issue had been changed. Instead, as far as Ruhr branches of the military government were concerned, the whole affair became one of the major uncertainties of life. Would there be a list? If there was going to be one, when would it be? Or had it been? Press correspondents, harrying one worried official, caught him ending one eloquent defence of his investigatory activities on their behalf with the self-doubting comment: "That is, we'll get it if it hasn't been issued already in London."

Unsavoury rumours have actually begun to drift about as to the reason for the delay in announcement. Reports that the confusion is due to disagreement more between Britain and the United States on the all-important question of defining categories within the plan have been, of course, most current. There are also signs, however, that certain of the most acute among German political observers have different ideas. As Dr. Erich Noelting, the Land North Rhine Westphalia Socialist Minister for Economics, put it recently: "It cannot be ruled out that the British are anxious to make one more costly raid upon our industry before it is too late."

First reaction to such charges is naturally to dismiss them as facile and rather cheap propaganda. In the tangled confusion of German economic affairs, however, it is always dangerous utterly to rule out any possibility until one has investigated it. One can easily find at least the grounds for Dr. Noelting's suspicions. A sore point among German politicians for some time now has been the knowledge that the military government has been taking partial reparations from a large number of industrial installations in the Zone through the removal of machine tools and specialised equipment arbitrarily classified as war potential. This process, which is known in the jargon of the Control Commission as "multilateral reparations," has particularly disturbed the Germans because it has been very difficult for them to make any estimate of how much has been taken or how long it is likely to go on.

British explanations that the individual reparations being extracted from the plants have all been taken under the authority of, and for the disposal of, the Allied Commission on Reparations sitting at Brussels has failed to allay this unrest, since, if anything, the Ruhr is more frightened of the demands that may be made on it by France or Belgium than of its own familiar devils. Nor has much consolation been afforded by the promise of the Reparations branch of the Control Commission that in no case would so much machinery be removed from any plant not designed to be torn down under the dismantlement programme as to affect its efficiency for peacetime production. The Ruhr's managers and unions find one of their rare points of agreement in doubting the Occupying Power's ability to determine such delicate questions of industrial judgment. If this is so, say such members of the local, so-called responsible government as Dr. Noelting, "why don't they give us exact information on what they are doing, where they are doing it and how long they intend it to go on?"

The Control Commission appears to have no ready answer to this question. Probably the truth is that, due to the immense complexity of red tape which governs all the operations of the Occupation machine, no one has ever had the authority to let the local German government in on what was being done. Or possibly the reason is that, as reparations are now being handled as a bizonal problem, the only German governmental unit that the British officials might be able to report to would be the Bizonal Economic Council at Frankfurt—whose C.D.U. majority most distinctly is not *en rapport* with the S.P.D. Minister for Economics in Dusseldorf.

Whatever the reason, a good deal of suspicion is being excited over the delay. This is all the more unfortunate since, as far as can be gathered—the Control Commission is, if anything, even less likely to trust the Press with information than the Germans—the real reason for it is quite a simple one. Dr. Noelting's guess was a shrewd arrival at half of the truth; although he imagined the stupidity behind the situation, like most Germans he went wrong in ascribing Machiavellian motives to his masters. For what seems to have happened is that, in preparing the list of plants for demolition, someone nearly forgot about those suffering partial reparation treatment. Reasoning that the industrial units providing the partial removals of machinery did not properly come under the scheme for total dismantling on two grounds—first, that they were to be allowed to continue civilian production after all required equipment had been removed, and secondly that the process of removing this was soon to be completed—this unknown functionary simply neglected to consider them under his plan. His superiors did not notice the oversight, or perhaps agreed with him, and the scheme went off to Berlin and was duly approved. Only the accident of the then Deputy Military Governor, Sir Brian Robertson, arriving in the Ruhr on a visit toward the time the dismantling scheme should have been announced, prevented the actual publication of the dismantling order with this perfect loophole for effective anti-British propaganda in it. Sir Brian, who of all qualities does not lack in political imagination, apparently heard of the tactful solution the local experts had given their little difficulty by accident—and took immediate action, signalling Berlin at once to keep the general plan in limbo. It is not known what he said to the men on the spot, but it can be presumed either that the list will not come out until the missing plants have been added to it, or that partial reparations work will be halted.

Whether or not this will solve the difficulties surrounding its publication is another matter, and more doubtful. Although genuinely concerned at what their State may be losing in industrial power by indiscriminate and uncontrolled reparations activity going on in a mist of official secrecy, men like Noelting and his Cabinet colleagues, to say nothing of the heavily Communist-influenced leadership of the metal workers' union, are certainly not above making political capital out of a perfect occasion when presented to them on a platter. And the dismantling situation has been presented to them in such a manner; for whispers and rumours of military government intentions day by day over a period of a month have aroused a formerly apathetic public to a real and lively fright over what may be going on.

Do Dr. Noelting and the other S.P.D. leaders really want to stage a trial of strength with the British, or excite the population to overt rebellion against military government commands? It is probable that nothing is further from their minds. Particularly with the Americans moving into the Ruhr with ever increasing control, the S.P.D. element in the Land politics certainly looks to British support to afford it at least one friend in the official camp, at whatever later stage it may find it necessary to buck the overt application of "free enterprise" philosophy.

The S.P.D., on the other hand, has still to remember that it is an active political party, and in competition for the workers' support with the exceedingly well organised—and violently anti-military government—K.P.D. Kicking the C.C.G. in the teeth, as long as care is taken not to kick so hard as to knock the teeth out, would presumably be quite all right with the Socialist leaders. And it is highly probable that they will regard the plant dismantling issue as an extremely good platform for a little pre-winter display.

Control Commission public safety, industrial relations and regional government officers cannot be said to anticipate such a tactic with any evident pleasure, but it is not the thought of it that is really worrying them at the moment. What does offer some responsible officials cause for concern is the thought that just possibly the S.P.D. may not be quite as strong as it thinks in its control over the public. These officers don't like to think what might happen in an area of ten million population, mostly industrial proletariat, if any quiet little political demonstration happened to get—or be guided—out of hand. The total German police force available to keep order in the Land numbers only 18,000, more than two-thirds of whom are youthful recruits of less than two years' service. There is, of course, always the British Army, but calling it in would be handing the Communists the palm of political victory ready made.

Behind all these forebodings about the possible reaction to an already bungled situation lies a genuinely bad conscience on the part of Control Commission chiefs in the Ruhr over a secret they are jealously guarding. If any one factor could bring disaster to the Ruhr economy it would be the joining of the miners' union with the metal workers in calling a general strike. The military government is hoping against hope that the miners will stay out of any unpleasant reactions that may occur to the announcement of the plant demolition list. This despite the fact that they know 45 per cent. of the miners' union leadership to be Communist, and presumably ready and willing to take the rank-and-file in any direction likely to help the Party's fortunes.

Yet at the same time the senior Control Commission officers know themselves to be keeping quietly in their files, "until a suitable occasion for release," the name of the man chosen by the high-level Anglo-American planners who looked into the Ruhr coal industry, to be the first German chairman of the new "native" coal board which is intended to take over from North German Coal Control in the near future. This candidate, Dr. Wilhelm Roelen, of Hamborn, has everything on his side from the point of view of a military government seeking someone who can handle the pits efficiently. A 58-year-old engineer, he has been in mining for some thirty years, and is well known for invention of several technical processes.

Unfortunately Dr. Roelen has also a couple of disadvantages from what is sometimes called the "public relations standpoint." As long-time managing director of the Walsum-Hamborn compound mine and Thyssen Gas and Water Company, Duisburg, he is a prominent member of the Ruhr management heirarchy that before and during the war so stoutly supported Hitler. He is also a 1934 party card holder in the S.A. Even the most optimistic of Control Commission officials feel that the Ruhr Left is likely to make some outcry about his selection to take over the area's most important industry.

With the help of tactful publicity, this can probably be handled, of course. But it is felt that it would be of assistance if the coal miners weren't told about it until after the plant dismantling situation has come and gone.

Dusseldorf, October.

A LONDON DIARY

Mr. Chuter Ede is a popular appointment as Deputy Leader of the House and he will have a specially important job this session in piloting through the Criminal Justice Bill. This Bill, I take it, will be much the same as that which Lord Templewood, then Sir Samuel Hoare, was compelled to withdraw because of the outbreak of war. Immense pains have been taken in drafting the Bill; it embodies the fruits of long experience at the Home Office and many of those who had been most responsible for the improvements in our judicial administration had been called in to help. The most controversial clauses are likely to be the proposals to abolish flogging and capital punishment. This last, long-overdue change is, I understand, to be left to a free vote of the House. Nearly 200 M.P.s have already signed a memorial against the death sentence. As to flogging, there is a great preponderance of opinion against it among all who have anything to do with it. Its evil results on the psychology both of warders and of prisoners, its non-deterrent character, are admitted by responsible prison governors and by most experts in penology. The time of this Government has been so taken up with economic legislation and administrative problems that it has had little opportunity of dealing with a number of useful social reforms on which many Liberals and Conservatives will be in agreement. The Criminal Justice Bill is an outstanding example of the sort of legislation on which men of good will should really get together.

* * *

Reading the excerpts from Mr. Byrnes' book, *Speaking Frankly*, I was amused at the odd contradiction in American law that, though any Civil Servant may be dismissed for associating with Communists, there is no Official Secrets Act. As a result, Mr. Byrnes may publish his verbatim transcription of the Yalta Conference, copies of which are still marked "Top Secret" in the Foreign Office and State Department files. The ex-Secretary of State apparently regards it as legitimate also to publish some purely British secrets about the alleged agreement with Stalin by which Britain was given a free hand in Greece in return for a "hands off" policy in Rumania. Perhaps all this will spur Mr. Churchill on to tell in his memoirs about the fantastic document produced in Moscow when he visited Stalin without Roosevelt, listing the "percentages of interest" which East and West were said to have in the countries of Europe. It is alleged that it was then agreed that Britain had 25 per cent interest in Poland, and so should have a Cabinet that was at least a quarter friendly! The theme of Mr. Byrnes' book is, of course, that, in spite of all efforts to accommodate them, the Russians have proved unamenable because they are bent on world domination. Though Mr. Churchill knows enough about politics and war to tell America that Russia is not, in his view, aggressive in the military sense, it is possible that his memoirs will have a slant similar to that of Mr. Byrnes. Marshal Stalin's memoirs are eagerly awaited.

* * *

Apropos of recent remarks about smear stories, I have been asked whether I can finally contradict the yarns about Mr. and Mrs. Bevan's "requisitioned" house. I can. The Bevans, to my personal knowledge, moved into their present very unpretentious house in 1944 on a ten years' lease. A correspondent this week also writes to say that he was told by a Tory friend that Mr. Shinwell "had bought a house at Sutton for £8,500 and was having it redecorated throughout and heating with fuel oil installed." As a result of my remarks he took a bet of £5 that this story was untrue. He wins his bet. I have just made inquiries from an authoritative source and learn that Mr. Shinwell has not moved from the house at Tooting where he has lived, very modestly, for twenty years. There is not, therefore, one single word of truth in the story. His son, also E. Shinwell, has in fact a house at Leatherhead which he was able to take after its occupation by the army during the war. He has had no decorations or changes made in the house, but took it exactly as it was handed over to him from the Army.

My informant, after telling me the result of his inquiries, said: "Mr. Shinwell takes no action about these smear stories, which often include the usual rubbish about his wife's mink coats, and so on. I wish somebody would start such stories about me: being a Christian I would at once issue a writ for slander."

* * *

I had known Sidney Dark for about fifteen years, but it was not until I read his obituaries this week that I knew he had been a professional actor for a period in his early life. The discovery particularly interested me because, whenever I saw Sidney Dark, I always thought of him as an actor. He looked like one, talked like one, and, if I can be excused the idiom, wrote like one. He was a very good editor of the *Church Times*, just as he was once a good contributor to the *Daily Express* or *John o' London's Weekly*. He was, above all, a journalist: he could spread a little experience into the most readable column. He had something fresh, but not profound, to say about everything. He greatly enjoyed living and would have had no objection to being called a *bon viveur*. By stressing this elastic turn of mind which enabled him to write with ease on so many topics, I do not suggest that Sidney Dark was not sincere in his religious opinions. Religion, I should say, was his most permanent interest. He was a devoted admirer of Conrad Noel, whose biography he wrote, and he was at his best, I thought, in writing an occasional review for this journal on a theological topic. He was the sort of man whom it was always pleasant to meet. He paraded his prejudices to start an argument. He kept up the Chestertonian tradition of jovial Christianity, and he had a constant stream of good stories and amusing conversation.

* * *

In *A Short Way with Dissenters*, Daniel Defoe showed that a most effective plea of defence may be made through the technique of launching a comically savage attack. Sagittarius in *Let Cowards Flinch* (published by Turnstile Press this week, 6s), has adopted the same technique and gone one better. If anyone took Churchill and some of the Tories at their word, Mr. Attlee would now be consigning every dissenter to a concentration camp, and the gutters would be running with the blood of the middle classes. So Sagittarius describes in Byronic verse the revolutionary deeds of the Labour leaders, and Vicky depicts them all in French Revolutionary costume. The result of this treatment of our familiar sansculottes is staggeringly funny. Vicky's caricatures are brilliant: the best are the small ones, including Zilliacus and Jenny Lee (as Charlotte Corday). Sometimes Sagittarius, who wrote her verses some months ago, is prophetic: she puts "Stafford at the prow and Attlee at the helm," and her description of Stafford Cripps should perhaps be given complete:

Next Cripps, a St. Just, with a breast of ice,
  Antithesis of native British bonhomie,
Exacting economic sacrifice,
  Armed with the Fabian Book of Deuteronomy,
Resolved to squeeze big business in a vice,
  Annihilating *laissez-faire* economy,
To seal the capitalist cornucopia
And substitute a doctrinaire's Utopia.

This book will be a classic. It will convulse innumerable Christmas dinner tables.

* * *

I find myself in agreement both with Bishop Barnes and the Archbishop. A very large number of modern, but less outspoken, Churchmen believe just as much and as little as Bishop Barnes, and it is hard to see how a rational man can help rejecting some aspects of orthodoxy that seem incredible to Bishop Barnes. But the Archbishop seems on firm ground when he suggests that such modernist views are not compatible with holding episcopal office in the Church of England. However, the strength of the Church lies in its elasticity, and I am glad Bishop Barnes does not intend to be consistent, and to resign.

* * *

The oddest comment I have seen on the death of Sidney Webb was made by a journalist in the *Daily Express* on Tuesday. He described Beatrice and Sidney Webb leaving a meeting with linked arms, "he with apple-red cheeks and frosty beard, she with an immobile, button face, both tiny. . ."! Now, Beatrice Webb was a tall woman, of commanding presence and striking beauty. Her features were classically cut and her nose aquiline. I wonder who this tiny button-faced woman was? Critic

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to J. C. C. Bennett.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Praising the spirit of the British people, he said: "The further I get away from them the more my admiration grows."—Lord Beaverbrook, reported in *Sunday Express*.

We find that our cows give their highest milk yields to the strains of eighteenth-century chamber music, such as Haydn quartets. Music in the modern idiom often calms them into lying down at the wrong time; "swing" definitely creates a "kicking the bucket" tendency.—Letter in *Radio Times*.

Mr. Isaacs, who was opening a new clothes factory at Edmonton (Middlesex), appealed to the workers of Britain to increase their output "by 10 per cent. on a five-day week, or 2 per cent. per day."—*Edinburgh Evening News*.

Mr. James Cooper, a butcher in business at 18 Mealcheapen Street, described seeing on September 23 this year a large monkey "which was as big as an adult and resembled a chimpanzee," sitting in the defendant's shop window.

It devoured twelve packets of Keating's beetle powders and packets of Bob Martin's powders one by one, and then disappeared.—*Berrow's Worcester Journal*.

"The Conservatives do not believe it is necessary and, even if it were, we should oppose it," he declared.—Speech by Mr. Quintin Hogg, M.P., reported in *Oxford Mail*.

SIDNEY WEBB

Of the great Fabian group who in the '80s and '90s moulded the form which British Socialism should take, only Bernard Shaw survives; and at the age of ninety-one is still writing with point and vigour. Graham Wallas and Lord Olivier died before the war; the Webb partnership was broken with the death of Beatrice in 1943. Sidney has outlived her by four years.

No one has yet done justice to the prodigious intellectual stimulus of Sidney Webb. The comparison with Bentham is striking. Like Bentham, Webb examined all the tangle of British institutions of his day, legal, political, economic and social, explained to his generation how they worked, tested them all by the standard of utility, and proposed practical and constructive remedies. In all their voluminous historical research, as well as in their books on the decline of capitalism and the necessity of Socialism, the Webbs were inspired by a practical determination to improve present institutions. Characteristically, they told me that the amount of money they earned from their books in their lifetime was just about enough to pay for the salaries of the long succession of their research secretaries. The work was done with meticulous care and method, and the research secretaries left fully equipped to take their part in the social battle.

They were able to live this kind of life because Mrs. Webb, one of the nine famous Potter daughters, had about £1,000 a year of her own. Webb's parents were poor; he began as a Lower Division clerk in the War Office, and became a Class I clerk in the Colonial Office, which in 1891 he left to marry and to begin his long and creative period on the London County Council. He returned to the Colonial Office nearly forty years later as Secretary of State. During the intervening years he and Beatrice not only completed their massive historical researches, but also turned their house in Grosvenor Crescent into a dynamo of practical activity. They played a leading part in that fusion of the Socialist and trade union movements which is now the Labour Party, and it was from the Webbs that it derived its own evolutionary and gradualistic form of Socialism by persuasion, education and "permeation." Sidney and Beatrice believed in the necessity of a ruling class: they regarded the capitalist ruling class as grossly inefficient and wanted to substitute a scientifically trained and responsible body of elected and appointed persons.

If "gradualism" is inevitable, it must find its instruments where it can. The Webbs entertained and weighed up promising young Liberals like Lloyd George and Winston Churchill. They were friends of Haldane and Balfour, and it was Webb who drafted the Balfour Education Act. A few years later the appointment of Mrs. Webb to the Poor Law Commission was the beginning of an extraordinary period of fertile research and suggestion from which stemmed most of the social reforms of the next thirty years. Other incidental activities were the founding of the School of Economics and of the New Statesman in 1913. In its early period the reputation of the New Statesman was largely built on the carefully documented supplements contributed by Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

By the time Webb became President of the Board of Trade in 1924, he was already too experienced as a draftsman and compiler of memoranda to be a successful Minister. He was the ideal civil servant. In 1929 he went to the House of Lords as Colonial Secretary, but partly because his voice, which in past years had been effective in lecturing on Socialism all over the country, was no longer powerful enough to be heard in that august assembly, he retired to finish his researches with Mrs. Webb. It was in this period that the Webbs became absorbed in Russia; they were determined to study Socialism in action. "Old people," they remarked, "are always absorbed in something, usually themselves; we prefer to be absorbed in the Soviet Union." They visited the Soviet Union; with the help of translators they read innumerable documents and books; they interrogated visitors to Russia of any nationality who could be induced to visit them in their home. At this period it was a remarkable and somewhat exhausting experience to spend the week-end at Passfield Corner. The visitor returned to London feeling that he had enjoyed an intellectual feast of the highest possible quality; given a strong digestion, the stimulus and nourishment would last for many days.

A common delusion about Sidney Webb is that he was "inhuman." Nothing could be further from the truth. He was inhuman only in the sense that he possessed to a higher degree than anyone I have ever met the qualities of disinterested reasonableness. That is certainly an unusual human quality. Because he was single-minded and infinitely kind, he was a better person to go to for help in difficulty than Beatrice Webb, who was a fascinating mixture of aristocratic superiority, intellectual impatience and puritanical morals. He once remarked to me that he was only unusual in that he never had "any inside," and he explained this by saying that he never had a headache or an attack of indigestion. Unlike Mrs. Webb, who was always interested in religion and the complications of human character, Sidney never understood what art or religion were about, and could really only deal with them in his social plans by creating special categories of unreasonable artistic people who would not fit in but who, he admitted, in a democracy must be allowed to go their own way. Perhaps his outstanding quality was his disinterested generosity. He wanted to see his ideas put into practice, and he never cared who got the credit. Of him it may be said, as truly as it was said of Bentham, that all the world stole from him and left him rich.

Kingsley Martin

THE RELEVANCE OF SWITZERLAND

Beyond Constanz the lake narrows, first to a string of lagoons and then into the swift green Rhine, now flowing through Switzerland and now dividing it from Germany. Here during the war a friend of mine, who had escaped from a prison camp in West Prussia, crossed the frontier successfully and then, without knowing it, walked back into Germany. Now the area is a smugglers' paradise. If you swim out twenty yards you will be suddenly halted by the shouts of a Swiss soldier, reminding you to keep to territorial waters.

For generations the peasant, by accident of birth labelled "German," has looked with friendly contempt on his Swiss-born neighbour. "There," he would think complacently, "there, but for the grace of the All Highest go I. How easily might I too have been condemned to the bourgeois neutrality and to the ignominy of the Swiss accent." Today, not only in Germany but throughout Europe, Swiss citizenship is an asset beyond price and the scrubby paper currency of the Federal Bank is more highly valued than the dollar bill. The British tourists, who were still last summer descending like an occupying army upon the shops and exploiting the hospitality of the hotels with indifferent greed, are envious. "Of course it pays to be neutral," they say with the slightly disparaging smile of the heroes of the blitz. They applaud the cleanliness, industry and public morality of this tight little country, but with the tacit reservation that it is an "inglorious," and undeserved result of the uniquely favourable geographical conditions.

But is this really so? Here is a country with no natural advantages except beauty and water power. Yet the Swiss have combined a huge increase of population with a rising standard of living. Despite poor land—huge areas are uncultivatable and even larger areas would not be considered worth cultivating by British farmers—they have developed intensive agriculture of specialised products. Possessing no coal or iron, they have a large-scale industry; and maintain a steady flow of exports, though they possess no privileged markets. Nor can we argue that they are wealthy because they are not burdened by the military budget which makes other nations prefer guns to margarine. In the last war they mobilised a greater proportion of their population for military service than either the Germans or ourselves and expended vast sums on fortifications. Neutral Switzerland has made heavy sacrifices for defence and fought many wars. It is no use therefore writing off Swiss prosperity and democracy as a lucky accident. Without quite extraordinary efforts Switzerland would have remained a backward mountain area; without both a foreign and a defence policy, executed with skill and daring, the Cantons would have been incorporated one by one into the adjacent Great Powers, and so shared the fate of Vorarlberg.

The main reason both for Switzerland's survival and for her prosperity is the peculiar structure of her Constitution and the delicate balance between external and internal policy. These have slowly been achieved through generations of trial and error. Neutrality is not merely a negative policy of selfish indifference but the positive basis of Swiss freedom. Without federalism, no neutrality: without neutrality, no federation. They are two sides of the same shield.

We sometimes assume that Swiss democracy works so well because the Swiss are a solid, unimaginative people who can easily be managed. Actually the Confederation was formed after a period of intense imperialism, culminating in the defeat of Marignano, and covers a multitude of passionate conflicts, religious, racial and political. Moreover, it binds together peoples in the most various stages of economic evolution, as anyone can see who compares the life of the reactionary central Cantons with that of Basle or Zürich. The United States of America has integrated her mixed population by substituting a single American way of life for the various national cultures of her immigrants; and by transforming a loose Confederation of States into a well-knit nation. That is why the Federal Government's powers are steadily encroaching on State rights. Swiss unity has been achieved in the opposite way: by emphasising cultural diversity and by decentralising government to the Cantons to the greatest possible extent. Unlike the American State, the Swiss Canton remains the real community, with its own dialect, costume, style of architecture and constitution; and the balance of Federal and Cantonal rights is threatened with breakdown if ever external or internal pressures prove too great. Swiss history is not only a quiet record of commercial progress, but a story of hairbreadth political escapes. Apart from Britain there is no country more exposed to the tempests of world politics and world economics or more in need of speedy adaptation to change. But unlike Britain, whose imperial strength and insular position have enabled her to "muddle through," the Swiss have been compelled to understand the principles of their democracy and consciously to plan its foreign policy. Here there can be no simple Churchillian alternative between appeasement and resistance to the forces of evil, no abstract debate on pacifism *versus* militarism. Survival depends on a constantly varying approximation of the desirable to the practicable. Swiss statesmen have had to learn the lesson that policy must be exactly commensurate with strength. To over-reach yourself in seeking the ideal is a worse sin than falling short of the possible.

Perhaps this is why the Swiss today are the most adult and the most reactionary democrats in the world. Women's organisations in Basle, as I learnt with astonishment, recently protested against an all-party proposal that women should be given the vote, because they felt that they really had not the time to grapple with the endless plebiscites and elections which confront the Swiss elector. The Swiss men, this summer, obliged by heavily voting the proposal down. Reactionary, of course, but the reasoning behind it was profoundly democratic.

The mainspring of Swiss federalism is, of course, the policy of armed neutrality. To maintain unity between Catholic and Protestant, between German-, French- and Italian-speaking Cantons, it has been essential to avoid participation in alliances with Switzerland's neighbours. Religion in the seventeenth century, when the policy of neutrality was first developed, was as disruptive as ideology today. The Swiss could only retain their unity and their freedom by a foreign policy which permitted ideological debate within the Confederation but forbade ideological bias in its foreign affairs. Cantons have frequently behaved in an extremely un-neutral way, when their passions were aroused by events in neighbouring countries. The Ticino, for instance, sided passionately with the Italian democrats during the Risorgimento; and the French Swiss were Pétainist and the German Swiss fiercely anti-Nazi during the last war. Spiritual neutrality has never been demanded of the Swiss citizen or of the Swiss press; but to prevent the disruption of the State by factional strife and to deter the Great Powers from invasion, neutrality was the only possible policy. It has demanded a daring combination of "force and fraud" and an understanding of power-politics far greater than that required for a simple policy of alliances. The German invasion of Switzerland, for instance, which seemed certain on two occasions at least between 1940 and 1945, was thwarted by a mixture of economic appeasement and military threats. The latter included plans for the destruction of all the tunnels through the Alps (including the Saint Gothard, where the gold was stored), a scorched earth policy in the industrial areas of the northern plain, and the military defence of the fortified Réduit in the central mountains. It was the fact that the Swiss army was in deadly earnest with these plans which prevented the invasion.

The policy of armed neutrality has had one defect. It is ineffective when the Great Powers agree. After the Napoleonic wars, for instance, Swiss freedom was threatened by the Holy Alliance. United, the Great Powers could bully the Confederation; but as long as they quarrel they have to woo it. Paradoxically enough, it was because they were usually in conflict that Switzerland prospered: her freedom and her unity have been precariously but deliberately based on the balance of power.

I cannot help wondering whether this story is entirely irrelevant to the problems of Western Europe. In the era when European politics *were* world politics, peoples of four languages and two religions preserved their freedom by joining together in a pact of armed neutrality. The policy was not always successful in preventing invasion and sometimes demanded the waging of war. But still the Swiss remained determined to cooperate with everyone and to ally themselves with no one. And slowly the Confederation grew and prospered.

Today the European balance of power has been transformed into a world balance of power, and the European conflict of religions into a world of ideologies.

In the dimensions of world politics the subcontinent of Western Europe is as central, as exposed, and almost as small as Switzerland compared with the old European Powers. United and well armed we could deter, but not in the last resort resist, either American or Russian aggression. Strategically both need us in case of war, but each might be constrained to leave us alone if it was certain that we were not conspiring with the other side and were prepared to defend our independence against any and every attack. Western Europe's real weakness today is not economic, but political. Both between the nations and within each nation, loyalties are precariously divided between the rival creeds and economic empires. In permitting ourselves to be lined up one by one on this side or that, we tear our European civilization to pieces, destroy our commerce, endanger our liberties, and make our devastation in war a certainty.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

6,000 DEATHS A YEAR

TRAGICALLY, the figure has ceased to shock; its strange constancy, year after year, has nearly earned it the status of inevitability. Eighteen people, four of them children, leave their homes every day and never come back: they are killed on the roads. Marching four abreast, the annual 6,000 would form a procession 1,000 yards long. They would two-thirds fill the Albert Hall. They . . . but our daily reading has for years included rows of noughts, with pictorial comparisons; and we tend to see the figures as abstract symbols having an existence of their own, emotionally remote from the realities they record, competing for our attention in a world growing daily more difficult for them. 100,000 killed in the Punjab rioting? Terrible; but the Bengal famine killed 3,000,000. 6,000 killed on the roads? But 6,000,000 Jews were murdered by the Nazis. Anyway, 6,000 people are killed every year in their own homes, by burning and scalding and electrocution and falling downstairs. Ten times that number die of cancer. Most people give no more than a glance to a newspaper article peppered with noughts.

Against the background of anguish in 6,000 homes every year, and the fact that most of it is preventable, this suggests a heartless apathy. But it's an apathy that presents itself as a sense of proportion, and it alone can explain some of the negative opinions of the Ministry of Transport Committee on Road Safety, who have just issued their final Report. These opinions, expressed for the most part as dissensions from the sweeping recommendations made by the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Prevention of Road Accidents (the Alness Committee), could be regarded collectively as the price we are *not* prepared to pay for the reduction of road deaths. The Committee's positive recommendations are sound enough without being courageous, and include the removal of a number of legal and administrative anomalies.

They are not in favour of setting up a central index of licensed drivers, recording ages, occupations, annual mileage done, type of vehicle normally driven, and accidents in which they have been involved. This is not because they don't think it would contribute to the cause they met to consider—road safety: they agree that it would, especially as a means of studying "accident proneness." But they think it would involve "too much labour and expense," and point out that it would be several years before it began to serve its purpose. In other words, they find no adequate reason for rejecting a proposal that has been advocated for years by people occupationally qualified in road traffic management; and they impliedly admit this when they say that "it might be open to objection on other grounds." What grounds?

In view of the almost universal agreement that speed is one of the chief causes of accidents, it is astonishing that they should find little virtue in a proposal to require the fitting of an "external" instrument to show the speed of a car to people other than the driver. Many such devices are available, some of them patented, and the Ministry of Transport has seen them nearly all. The Committee are against them because they would be expensive, difficult to fit to existing speedometers, inadequate as "proof" of an offence (which is true of speedometers anyway, and is provided for in the Road Traffic Act), and a "distraction to other road users." The Report admits that they would "have certain advantages to road safety" without mentioning that they would, above all, frequently engage the attention of police patrol cars when they recorded illegal speeds—a chastening reflection for the speed-hog. But the Committee are not over-worried about speed—they even recommend that heavy goods vehicles should be allowed to go faster.

The drunken driver comes off fairly well. A man accused of "careless driving" cannot elect to be tried by jury, but if it is alleged that he was also drunk he can. Juries are notoriously less likely than magistrates (as the Report acknowledges) to convict for "drunk and driving"; magistrates, or their experienced clerks, are—to quote the Report—"fully alive to the significance of 'being under the influence of drink' as distinct from being 'drunk.'" There are many quite serious offences in relation to which the legislators, by limiting the penalty to three months' imprisonment, have purposely withheld the right to trial by jury; but the Committee cannot bring themselves to recommend this in the case of the drunken driver. Laudable as this may be in principle, it provokes some odd comparisons. Again, the Alness Committee reported in favour of "voluntary" blood tests to ascertain whether a driver has enough alcohol in his blood-stream to make him unfit to drive: this is done compulsorily in Scandinavia, where conviction is almost certain if the alcohol concentration exceeds a certain figure. But the new Committee do not approve of blood tests, voluntary or compulsory, for a reason which will seem inadequate and almost fanciful to anyone experienced in the handling of "drunk and driving" cases. "If," they say, "the Alness Committee meant that police should be allowed to make a blood test with the consent of the accused person, the objection might be raised that the police were inviting him to incriminate himself when, in their view, he was not in a fit condition to understand what he was being asked to do." But if drunkenness vitiates consent to a medical examination, every investigation of a drunkenness charge involves a technical assault. The doctor pulls up the accused man's eyelids to see the state of his pupils, and takes his wrist to time his pulse. Even if there is no touching, restraint and intimidation are implicit in the words "Stand up," "Walk along that chalk line," "Stand on your left foot and close your eyes." They are addressed to a person in custody by a person in authority. The accused gives no valid consent because he is not a free agent—or if he is he dosen't know it. Some years ago Mr. Justice Swift said that, when a prisoner alleged to be drunk consented to be medically examined, the validity of that consent depended on whether he was in fact drunk or not. If he was, he couldn't give consent at all and it was an assault to examine him; if he wasn't, then the need for medical examination did not arise and he should not be in police custody! The police, unable to discover which way they went from there, have continued the practice as before. But to revive this objection in relation to blood tests for tipsy motorists is to place motorists, when they get drunk, in a specially protected category. Little is heard about the medical examination of ordinary drunks, who would generally harm none but themselves. The Committee's main recommendation about drunken drivers, apart from increased propaganda in pubs, is that penalties should be "severe enough to act as a deterrent." The history of penology is against them.

The proposal that pedal cycles should be registered and carry number plates is treated by the Committee, in rejecting it, as though practically its sole object was to make larceny more risky and the recovery of stolen bicycles more likely. But the likelihood of identification is one of the strongest deterrents to the law-breaker, and the Committee's real reason, it appears, is that "the number of cyclists in this country is estimated at between 10,000,000 and 12,000,000."

We are back at the rows of noughts and the problem of propagandist dyspepsia. Either the number of people being killed is so appalling as to justify *any* practicable means of reducing it, or the figures must greatly increase before our punch-drunk susceptibility to statistics recovers enough to become imaginative once again. If this should happen, anyone then reading for the first time the negative recommendations of this Committee would do so with horrified incredulity. Its positive recommendations (there are fifty-eight of them) are, for the most part, admirable and urgent.

C. H. ROLPH

The Arts and Entertainment

THE MOVIES

"Fame is the Spur," at the Leicester Square

"Uncle Silas," at the Odeon

Eighty per cent, I suppose, of films originate from novels: deplorable dependence, but we'll pass that. The real snag of borrowing always from novels, simply because they are popular and have plots and characters, is that the resultant hybrid tends to make the worst of both worlds. If (on the level of readability) the film achieves an easier, more viable flow, how much it loses by trying to preserve a structure not its own! Where are the means to elaborate the characters, to twist and turn, to pause, to consider, to develop an action or a theme as even the least skilled of novelists would manage? Where is the time to encompass the passing of time? How to transform a past recollective into continuous present? And yet the screen shows a positive addiction not only to the novel in general but to those forms of it that most defy translation. The rambling chronicle, the three-decker entanglement, the progress from the cradle to the grave positively fascinate our film-makers, who accord it every horror of period and make-up. Not only that, they will even try to cram three generations into a couple of hours, seeming to boast that here, at any rate, we are getting our money's worth. Such pieces more than ever convince me that the single action and the short story are the cinema's true field of play. Compare last week's *Partie de Campagne* (from a Maupassant story), and such triumphs of narrative as *Brief Encounter* and *Le Jour se Lève*, with this week's *Fame is the Spur* and *Uncle Silas*. The last two, skilful enough specimens of their kind, fairly bawl the fact that they are large novels cut down. One can hear the flip of pages, hundreds at a time; the screen's tamest little shorthand notes must do duty for all those lost chapters.

Fame is the Spur has the advantage of a serious subject: the subtle corruption that may overtake a Radical politician, who begins with revolution and ends with after-dinner platitudes and a title. Mr. Michael Redgrave brings to this Ramsay MacDonald character—who is *not*, of course, Ramsay MacDonald—an unusual sensitiveness and conviction. The charm, the rhetoric, the considerate vanity of this well-padded idealist have an ironic appeal, and there's a goodish background of low and high places. But a whole period of history has been allowed to slip by with only the barest indications—here a strike, there the Suffragettes or the War—and of the central character only illustrative scenes and anecdotes jog by along the conveyor belt. It can't quite be brought off, though the film, let me add, is quite worth seeing. It misses the solidity (as I take it) of Mr. Howard Spring's novel, to whom also must be accredited the unlikely symbol of a sword literally waved on platforms which afterwards rusts over the mantelpiece.

The trouble with *Uncle Silas* is that a corpulent Gothic-domestic tale has been squeezed of nearly all save its melodramatic backbone (the same happened, you remember, with *David Copperfield* and *Nicholas Nickleby*). Le Fanu, though more original in his short stories, has considerable talents for atmosphere and the social scene, which the film minimises. But the resulting shocker isn't a quarter as silly as most of the reviewers have exclaimed. Uncle Silas himself (Derrick de Marney) retains some of his eerie dandified appeal and as the diabolical French governess Mlle Katina Paxinou provides a by no means unalarming gargoyle. Miss Jean Simmons, as the threatened heiress, charmingly impresses the reality of the person to whom things happen. The Gothic convention has inspired the director, Charles Frank, to many good sequences: notably the surrealist treatment of the journey to London which no more offers an escape from Bartram-Haugh than would a nightmare in one of its many locked bedrooms. Bunched melodrama though it is, I found *Uncle Silas* uncommonly enjoyable.

William Whitebait

RADIO NOTES

The Shakespeare week began badly with some preliminary remarks in the *Radio Times* which forcibly recalled the wistful and impossible hope once expressed by Sir Edmund Chambers that in the matter of Shakespeare "the people should not be misled." There was, inevitably, the confident, unfortified, and unacceptable statement that in the three parts of *Henry VI* there are "undoubtedly chunks of Marlowe, Peele and Greene"; more culpably, there was an article by Dr. Tillyard which asserted that the eight plays covering the historical time from Richard II to Richard III were "conceived as a whole," an observation for which there is no authority other than Dr. Tillyard's wish to keep everything tidy in his own mind; and, of course, there was much talk of "the two tetralogies," though the early plays can only be regarded as forming a tetralogy if we are willing to be extremely evasive over the well-known problems raised by *Henry VI* Part one. It was, in fact, over *Henry VI* that a glorious week, exceptional in both acting and production, came catastrophically to pieces. There is a mystery about this. Mr. Ridley told us in a talk that he and the cast had been surprised at the many virtues they had discovered in the *Henry VI* plays; it is remarkable that a man who has actually edited the plays for printing should not have discovered these virtues before, and they would have been more clearly communicated to the listener if the two *contention* plays, now known as Parts two and three of *Henry VI*, had been given on separate evenings, and if the unsatisfactory and much-disputed Part one had been dismissed in a few words of description. The early double-play on the Wars of the Roses is a startling revelation of how the young Shakespeare could organise and control a vast tract of material; the potted version of the three parts which we had on Thursday satisfied no appetite: it was an antique feature-programme which had not even the merit of being easy to digest. A similar treatment was accorded the last acts of *Richard III* on the following night; and for some reason the advent of the young, god-like Richmond, which is a superb and longed-for moment from the time of Henry VI's prophecy, was utterly muffed.

But if Mr. Ridley's constructive powers were less than those they replaced, he deserves nothing but praise for his bold workmanship on the other texts, and for his admirable introductions to the separate performances. How one grew to look forward to these evenings! And what magnificent moments one remembers from them: Mr. David King-Wood as Richard II, first deposed and then imprisoned; Mr. Sebastian Shaw and Mr. Leon Quartermaine in the two great scenes between son and father in *Henry IV*; Miss Vivienne Chatterton in Mistress Quickly's lament on the death of Falstaff; brief moments of Mr. John Byron, apt and touching as Henry VI. The comedians, alas, suffered much from their invisibility, though Silence's "That was fifty-five years ago" was irresistibly funny. Mr. Frederick Lloyd's task as Falstaff was all but impossible, and the particular voice he employed gave us only a little of the character. Two performances stand out above all: Miss Gladys Young's Margaret and Mr. Stephen Murray's Richard III; less for their interpretation, though this was always illuminating, than for their plain devotion to the formal exigencies of the verse; within the smaller scope of their parts, one observed the same sensitiveness and exactness in Sir Lewis Casson and Mr. Francis de Wolff.

It is more and more clear that a wide disparity exists between the respective standards of the musical and literary sides of the B.B.C. Not only have the musical performances infinitely more polish and expertise; the whole department seems more adult, sensitive and mature; it is not given to dilution or vulgarisation. Where literature is concerned, even the Third Programme seems rarely to be addressing educated grown-ups. If it is true that the School Certificate Examination is to be abolished, may one hope that with it may go such curious little monsters as the be-featured version of Mr. C. S. Lewis's "Preface to 'Paradise Lost,'" given last Sunday to an audience which, if it was prepared to listen at all, could surely absorb a piece of literary appreciation without such interjections as "By Jove, that's a good line!" to coax it on.

Henry Reed

PRESENT DISCONTENTS

Music is one of the few departments of our national life in which supply now exceeds demand. Half-empty houses proclaim the sad truth: the boom has been unintelligently over-exploited, too much music is going on, and too little of it is attractive enough to compete with the sustained interest of the Third Programme. In the field of opera, though radio is here a less dangerous competitor, the mutually destructive *guerre des bouffons* reaches new heights of fantasy. This very day eight operatic performances are announced in and around London: three *Rigolettos*, two *Carmens*, a *Faust*, a *Barber* and a *Herring*. Could anything be madder? And managements seem to delight in putting obstacles in the way of the intending patron: last week one could never make out (in advance) from the press when *Herring* was to be given, and when *Lucretia*; and it is quite a business to squeeze out of the Cambridge Theatre that information about casts which every opera-house in the world has always announced and displayed as a matter of course.

But the root of our concert troubles is the lack of a hall which can offer an audience the one great compensation for all the bother of getting there and getting a meal and getting home—namely, the immediate thrill of round, rich, sonorous, well-balanced *live* tone. The only place where I have lately experienced this true joy of the concert-goer is at the Chelsea Town Hall during the Boyd Neel concerts (of which an admirable new series has just begun). Elsewhere we run into troubles and wonder why everything sounds so dull. The Albert Hall is a hopeless proposition; the Central Hall glaring and excessively resonant; the Wigmore all right for chamber music, if only its decoration and lighting were less shocking; and what about Covent Garden and Drury Lane? Both these theatres are acoustically good; but with an orchestra seated behind the proscenium, much of the tonal quality either escapes into the wings or sounds boxed in by the scenery: at last Sunday's admirable L.P.O. concert conducted by Ernest Ausermet, the additional presence of a choir behind the orchestra made things even worse, and these cramped conditions robbed the climax to Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* of its monumental impressiveness; I hate to have to say so, but it sounds better on the gramophone than it did at Covent Garden. I often wonder whether matters might not be improved at both these theatres (and perhaps at the Cambridge too) by the provision, on Sundays, of an apron stage over the orchestra pit which would allow the musicians to come forward and make themselves really felt in the body of the house.

Another, though smaller, annoyance vexes the present-day concert-goer: the inadequacy of the printed programmes. For the absence of music-type illustration economic excuses can be found, but not for the regular failure to print that essential, the words of vocal compositions. The Latin text was badly missed in the Stravinsky; but for sheer effrontery the shilling book of the Beecham-Strauss concert on the same evening takes some beating. We could have dispensed with the full-page portraits of Sir Thomas Beecham and Mr. Norman del Mar (even at a pinch, with that of Dr. Strauss himself) in return for a little information (a date or an opus number, even) about the least familiar music of the evening, *Macbeth* and the extracts from *Intermezzo* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*. We were not even told what characters were represented by the five soloists in *Ariadne*; and younger listeners, who have had no opportunity of making the acquaintance of this work on the stage, must have wondered why a typical German tenor should have begun by holding forth in the wings and suddenly wandered on to the platform, complete with score, in order to go on holding forth there. Apart from Maria Cebotari, the singing in *Ariadne* was poor; but Mr. Del Mar conducted *Macbeth* very ably, and Sir Thomas's *Heldenleben* was as fiery and sumptuous as ever.

Sandwiched between the formidably accomplished string quartets of Walton and Britten (No. 2), a new quartet (his third) by Benjamin Frankel made a rather thin effect at the Boosey and Hawkes concert. The instrumental layout is effective enough and some of the material seemed interesting, but in each of its five short movements the treatment tends towards monotony and a brevity, the point of which, at a first hearing, is hard to grasp.

If the new *Faust* provides Sadler's Wells with plenty of full houses, it will have served its purpose. Gounod's boulevard prettification of Goethe was beginning to look shabby in 1890, and much of it is threadbare by now. But a producer is bound to take the old ragbag seriously, and Dennis Arundell did what he could with flights of steps, queer lighting and illuminated crosses to suggest Germany, Gothic and Goethe (but would the old man not have demanded *mehr licht?*) Joseph Carl's garden scene belonged rather more to the world of Humperdinck and Walt Disney; and so did Mephistopheles, supposed to be a mediaeval gargoyle, but played by dear Howell Glynne with all the relish of a country policeman on a thoroughly juicy job: when he shut Martha up in her four-by-two cottage, I quite expected the whole thing to explode with a puff of smoke, like the witch's oven in *Hansel and Gretel.* Marguerite (Marion Lowe) sang well at times; Faust (James Johnston) almost always. Michael Mudic conducted admirably, and the ballet discovered unsuspected depths of evil in the most airy-fairy of waltz-tunes.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

NEW PICTURES FOR OLD

IN the debate over cleaning the National Gallery's pictures, which at intervals has been acrimoniously carried on for a little more than a century, the directorate has now scored heavily against the non-cleaners. It has hung together most of the works which have undergone the process in the course of the last ten years, so that their new-found freshness of colour carries full weight instead of being broken up and isolated amid tracts of still untouched opacity. Their effect is sufficiently powerful, but it is more germane to the question at issue that, owing to the exhibition's supporting documentation, they can be enjoyed without qualms. For with them are displayed "before and after" photographs and other pictures in different stages of the renovating treatment, which show exactly in what it consists. In addition, the attentions received by each individual exhibit are fully described in the catalogue, which, to quote Mr. Hendy, the Gallery's Director, "represents a frank statement such as no gallery has ever made before about its collection." It is by thus lifting the veil of bureaucracy from the mysteries of the laboratory, and so taking the public into their confidence, that those responsible for the cleaning have immensely strengthened their position.

The most telling demonstration-picture is the Van Huysum flower-piece with one half cleaned and the other left as it was, proving the utter falsification of colour, and hence of values, caused by soupy varnish and its accretions. As far as the removal of ancient varnish is concerned, an unanswerable case is made out. It cannot, indeed, be proved that every old master must necessarily look better for his rejuvenation, and as Mr. Hendy loyally grants, "However safe the method, however correct the principle, there will still be a wide margin for legitimate discussion concerning the finished product." It seems still uncertain whether quite judicious cleaning might not encourage a pentimento such as came to light in the full-length Philip IV; and where some colours have deteriorated, as in Filippino Lippis's "The Worship of the Golden Calf," cleaning can only stress the disturbance of values which results. How much the old masters painted with allowance for the maturing or mellowing of their tints is another matter for conjecture. Yet as to the necessity for cleaning, especially where "Gallery Varnish" was smeared on in the first half of last century, the exhibition and the clear reasoning of the catalogue leave no doubt. And to allay the fear that excessive severity might be practised, it is important to note that the "safety-margin test," inaugurated in 1939 by the International Museums Office for the League of Nations, which the Gallery now applies on all occasions, guarantees that the original paint is left entirely immune. With these facts firmly established, there is no need to regret the change back from venerable antiques to works of art.

E. TERRICK

THE THEATRE

"Romeo and Juliet" and "Twelfth Night," at His Majesty's

After the death of Tybalt and the sentence of banishment on Romeo, Shakespeare's first tragedy drags on broken-backed through two and a half acts of improbable and (to us) unamusing episodes which preclude all naturalistic presentation, all "sincere" acting. Only a half-amused virtuosity will now do. It was precisely at this point that Peter Brook's bag of tricks gave out. The scene of the duels was brilliantly handled in a manner which owed not a little to the ballet, as Capulet's feast had owed a great deal to the cinema (and indeed all this picking out of figures and groups in pencils of light against surrounding blackness is cinematographic because it destroys the stage as a stage, that is, as a square, confined space) and as the music throughout owed its poor all to the radio. One was left idly gazing at some of the ugliest and least appropriate sets I have seen, that stumpy balcony, those toy forts all round the footlights, a brass bedstead on the sky-line, half a dozen plates from a pre-war book on theatrical design all come to life at once. Two of the liveliest minor characters, Paul Scofield's Mercutio and Myles Eason's Tybalt, were dead. When she recommended forgetting Romeo and going through with the marriage to Paris, Beatrix Lehmann's mannered and engaging Nurse suddenly came unstuck, and one realised that she ought to have been a drooling, lascivious hag from the beginning. Juliet is a problem. How to look fourteen and at the same time reveal depth and unfold a delicate web of language, I do not know. Daphne Slater looks fourteen. Laurence Payne's Romeo acts too frequently with his stomach muscles and jaw-bone. At times too quiveringly sensitive even for an adolescent bridegroom, he sets his teeth and spits at us such an obvious cue for recollection as the speech beginning

"I do remember an apothecary,
And hereabouts he dwells. . . ."

The final curtain was ingeniously good. The last scene has been heavily cut, and Mr. Brook's black-cloaked Chorus (John Harrison, who also plays Benvolio) walks slowly across the stage in a failing light and quietly enunciates the last words given by Shakespeare to the Prince of Verona.

Walter Hudd's *Twelfth Night* opens with the passing of the principal figures in silhouette before an illuminated disc. The last two Viola and her Captain, are left talking. *Exeunt*, forgetting the barrel on which the Captain sat, an oversight later repeated by Sebastian and Antonio. But this is a gay, a pretty and an imaginative *Twelfth Night.* The trouble is that, where a producer invents so much (and so much of that much in building up his own part, for Mr. Hudd plays Malvolio), one has the impression that two plays are going on simultaneously and so decisively is the eye our master organ that Shakespeare's verse seeps unhappily away between the cracks of Mr. Hudd's floor work. The cast lacks a sufficiently robust Sir Toby. I have never seen Maria or Olivia played so young. A sad Welsh Feste sings well. In general there is, I find an agreeable flimsiness about the whole affair which throws Beatrix Lehmann's Viola (or rather B.L. *as* Viola, for not her interpretation but Nature is at fault) farther out of key than it might otherwise have been. Unquestionably the most successful production of their three, *Twelfth Night* is perhaps the measure of this slight and youthful company.

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Before the dollar crisis stripp'd the land,
Who could, unmov'd, trace thy forsaken sites,
Fairest of London's stillborn satellites?
O thou, the city planner's lawful pride,
With industry and housing side by side,
Abandon'd ere thy ground-plan was unroll'd,
Farewell, sweet Stevenage! thou art pigeon-hol'd.
Here winsome rented dwellings would have been,
With sun-trap fronts towards th' unlitter'd green,
Thy Civic Centre, seat of sober pomp,
Thy glitt'ring Dance-Hall for the modest romp,
Thy communal canteen and cultural hub,
Thy decent shop and semi-rural pub.
Full twenty miles from the congested Wen
Here would have thrived the sturdy citizen,
Here would old age, beside its two-room'd cot,
On milder days have potter'd at its plot,
While plum-cheek'd infancy fill'd plastic prams,
And childhood skipp'd among the green belt lambs.
Ill fares the town in Britain's planning age
Consigned to limbo in the blueprint stage!
Crown of the Town and Country Planning Bill,
Where is thy vanish'd urban overspill?
Torn from their dear, if insalubrious soil,
Transported to incessant Midland toil,
While round the world each needful product flies
For the bare minimum our trade supplies.
Here wilt thou rust, an undevelop'd spot
Where roadside hoardings speak the vacant lot,
Thy prefabs, tenanted beyond their terms,
From temporaries mould'ring into perms,
While thy well-planned amenities recede
As locals seize the confiscated mead,
And residents who curs'd thy smiling birth,
Thy blighted bowers taunt with vindictive mirth.
Farewell, thine unpretentious pleasure domes,
Thy terraces of homogeneous homes!
Unlike the pleasure dome of Xanadu
They will not deck the dear, domestic view,
With humming industry's contiguous plant—
Good heaven! Kubla Khan but Silkin can't!
More weed-grown, more forsaken year by year,
Farewell, thy landscap'd plots that never were!
Thy visionary vistas fade and wilt,
Sweet Stevenage! loveliest town they never built.

SAGITTARIUS

Correspondence

THE CASE OF M. PETKOV

SIR,—I am disturbed at the readiness of so many progressive people in England to describe the sentence on M. Petkov as "judicial murder" and to meet it with counter-accusations at the regimes in Greece and Spain. These counter-accusations are just. But they obscure the fact that Petkov was guilty.

1. Petkov was *not* a great "Resistance Leader." I would hesitate to belittle any man who took active part in the Resistance, particularly in Bulgaria, where this demanded exceptional qualities of courage and determination. But Petkov was not among these.

In the summer of 1944 he was invited by the Fatherland Front to join them and to sign their manifesto. (I have heard this action severely criticised by leading Bulgarian partisans, who knew that Petkov had already advised the Agrarian Youth to take no part alongside the Communists.) Petkov's name was then widely known as an Agrarian leader, and every effort was being made to unite all sections of the people in the struggle. For a long time he delayed his answer, It has transpired that during this period he was negotiating with the Regent, Filov, with the view to establishing a "moderate" Government with the support of the British and Americans, which would exclude the Fatherland Front and would come to power with the help, if necessary, of a Turkish "Army of Liberation."

Petkov finally agreed to sign only ten days before the popular rising of September 9th, 1944, when the Red Army already stood on the Danube. In the subsequent fighting he took no personal part.

2. After the rising, Bulgarian Armies were immediately switched to fight the Germans on the Hungarian and Yugoslav fronts. A few notorious Fascists were removed from positions of command and replaced by Resistance leaders. On the Home Front the most serious charges of war crimes were tried by People's Courts, but when, after six months, an amnesty was proclaimed, the bulk of the officer corps remained unpurged.

3. Petkov's Party originally included many men who wished to take part in a democratic and constitutional opposition. Inevitably it soon attracted all the pro-Fascist and extreme reactionary elements, who came to dominate its councils.

When his party was decisively rejected in the elections, the thoughts of many (and particularly of those officers who remained in strong positions in the Army) turned to other means. These ideas were encouraged by the American and British Missions, and by the support given to Dr. G. M. Dimitrov's "Agrarian" Committee in Washington.

4. The Opposition took up two forms of struggle.

First, a parliamentary struggle, which was conducted always with one eye on America and Britain. Many forms of this were contemptible (the case of the 23 deputies, etc.) but were within the law.

Second, by unconstitutional means, including active resistance to Government orders, such as the sabotage of measures essential to ensure food supplies in the face of near-famine, and open outbreaks of inspired rioting, arson and fighting.

Two large-scale military conspiracies were disclosed last year. These aimed at an outright *coup d'etat*, or, failing that, the creation of conditions for foreign intervention.

5. In the trials of the military conspirators Petkov was directly implicated. After studying the evidence carefully the Bulgarian Parliament suspended his parliamentary immunity from arrest.

6. Petkov was tried and sentenced *not* as leader of a political Opposition but for directing and inspiring sabotage and military conspiracy. This was in entire accord with Paragraph 4 of our Peace Treaty, in which the Bulgarian Government undertakes "not to allow the existence or the activities of political, military or semi-military organisations which aim at destroying the democratic rights of the people."

7. Petkov was tried, not before a "Special Court," but before the regular Sofia District Court, with the press and public attending. He was defended by five prominent members of the Sofia bar, among whom were several of his old political associates, and none of whom has complained of the legal procedure. The Supreme Court of Cassation confirmed both the procedure and the sentence.

8. Petkov's Party was *not* the Agrarian Party, but the Agrarian Opposition Party—a split-away group. Old and trusted leaders of the Agrarian Party are now serving in responsible positions in the Government and have done all in their power to heal this split. It is they, more than any other group, who declared Petkov to be an intransigeant enemy of the people's liberties.

The Bulgarian people remember with bitterness that by a military *coup d'etat* a Fascist regime was established in 1923. "Critic" (in the London Diary, September 27) sums up admirably the background to the Petkov trial—that there is still in Eastern Europe "a Fascist reaction (which) is a real and menacing thing which does conspire and murder and threaten renewed war." Why then does he continue: "the execution of Petkov is an evil and dishonest affair . . . part of a pattern which is now spreading across Eastern Europe?"

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Part of a pattern it certainly is, the pattern of history. These people, voted out of power without hope of return, attract the old Facsist elements, are urged forward by American and British support,and become deeply involved in conspiratorial activity from which they cannot or do not wish to withdraw. It may be a tragic human spectacle, but we cannot censure the Courts which defend the mandate of the electorate. Certainly we should not criticise until we have given to the evidence the most careful study.

Saunder's Close, E. P. Thompson
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TEACHERS AND EXAMS.

Sir,—It is disappointing to find in William McElwee's article, as in most of the press references to the Examination Council's report, no recognition of the evil which, unless a further reform is undertaken, will persist in the Grammar Schools. Two facts must be noted: that the method of selection of University scholarship winners was not within the terms of reference, and that no group or minimum subject requirements are recommended. In the absence of any further pronouncement by the Ministry or the Universities there is nothing in the Council's otherwise excellent proposals to prevent even greater specialisation and lack of balance in Sixth Form education. Freedom for a boy "to develop far more rapidly along his own most promising line" may in one set of conditions be a fine thing, in another the worst of evils.

The existing School Certificate regulations are so tolerant, and the academic standard so low, that no Grammar School concerned only with education in the best sense need have been limited by them. Why then have they appeared as a restriction? The answer is to be found in the fact that examinations are used as an instrument by forces outside the school, and teachers therefore have little control over the direction of their work. The university scholarship requirements are the final determinants of the nature of the school's work, forcing School Certificate down to an early age to leave a longer time in the Sixth, and encouraging a specialisation that has no relation to the needs of personality, of culture, or of citizenship. Scholarship success is the chief honour sought by the school. The pressure from parents and from the pupil's own sense of urgency is very strong, especially among the poorer people whose only hope of university education lies in scholarship successes. The "open road to the University" simply does not exist; we have in fact a bottleneck that lets through about one in five of those who attempt it and uses a questionable method of selection.

For some time past issue after issue of *The Times Educational Supplement* has recorded investigations and statements exposing the deplorable effects of Sixth Form specialisation, among the most alarming being the illiteracy and lack of groundwork among science candidates and the fact that out of 107 scholarship holders at Durham 23 failed in their first university examination. The Medical Schools seem to be more conscious than the other university departments of the lack of general education and culture among their applicants, and are beginning to use new methods of selection that cut across those used for the award of scholarships, thus creating a most anomalous situation. An unsuccessful scholarship candidate may be accepted and a scholarship holder refused, and for very sound reasons.

If the purpose of examination reform is to be achieved, the requirements for scholarships and university entrance must be broadened to make reasonably certain that candidates are *educated* and to encourage education rather than specialisation in the Sixth Form. No one seems to know whether the Ministry has any intention of dealing with this matter. One hopes that the Labour Government will recognise that the realisation of its more distant hopes depends on the creation of a large body of intelligent citizens who are widely informed, alert, responsive and aware of what is happening far outside the range of their own professional interests. Kenneth C. Barnes

Wennington School, Wetherby.

Sir,—You state that the Burnham Committee has recommended an increase of 30 per cent in the maximum salary for qualified assistant teachers. The fact is, of course, that the Burnham Committee has recommended an increase of £30 in the maximum of the scale, which is now £555 instead of £525. The percentage increase is, therefore, only 5.7 per cent.

Maidstone Grammar School. W. A. Claydon

[A number of letters have pointed out this mistake. "30 per cent" should, of course, have read "£30."—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

THE BRITISH CAR

Sir,—Having been abroad, I have only just seen the letter from Mr. Gresham Cooke, Director of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, which appeared in your issue of September 13th. The very reasonable and courteous comments which Mr. Gresham Cooke made on some of the criticisms and suggestions contained in my article which appeared in your issue of August 30th have since become even more important in view of the Minister of Supply's request to the motor industry and subsequent developments. May I, therefore, be allowed to answer some of them?

1. The American industry produces about 60 basic models, whereas ours produces no more. Exactly, but if the American industry with an output of more than 3½ million produce 60 basic models, ours with an output of less than 350,000 should have not more than six, or if, as I suggested, the output of mass-produced cars be reduced to 150,000, not more than three.

2. Our best export models in some countries are just those sporting types which presumably would be eliminated under rationalisation. I entirely agree, as did Mr. Maurice Edelman in a recent statement in his constituency, that production of these types should be encouraged as much as possible, provided they are of really good design and likely to secure a permanent market, since they have a much higher conversion factor in terms of foreign currency.

3. Reduction of models was going on fast before the war, but for which it would have made much greater progress. Mr. Gresham Cooke himself throws doubt on this opinion by pointing out that the horsepower tax was responsible for so much diversity.

4. To press the industry to concentrate on a handful of models would mean an enormous loss of production over the next few years, and if a firm which makes three models has to drop two, its output will probably drop by two thirds. This statement seems already to have been completely contradicted by the Standard Company, which, whilst continuing to produce a variety of pre-war models, has turned over its factory to the production of one new model, together with a tractor (with the same engine for both) and by the Austin Company, which has just announced that one new model is to take the place of three.

5. If the industry's output were cut by half, costs would probably be doubled. This no doubt would be true if the present output of the industry of over 40 basic models was cut by half, but that has no relation to my proposals, which were that output should be of three basic models, in runs of 50,000 per annum.

Finally, Mr. Gresham Cooke suggests that politicians' qualifications for advising on a commercial operation will be proved by the cost and output of coal during the next few years. I was not aware that politicians were engaged in the production of coal, but if Mr. Gresham Cooke will study the Reid Report on the Mining Industry and take a look at a few coal mines he will see how our pits were equipped and organised by their private owners. In any case, I was not advocating the immediate nationalisation of the industry, but only much greater speed and more drastic degree in rationalisation, which, he says, is already proceeding.

Christopher Shawcross
House of Commons.

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HAMBURG

SIR,—British folk in the Hamburg area, whether military, C.C.G. or belonging to one or other of the various business, or welfare, organisations, appear to be fated to live under a constant cross-fire of press criticism. Last time, when the attacker was a Mr. Potter of the *Daily Express*, both Lord Pakenham and the C.-in-C. also expressed themselves strongly on the general unfairness of his "bodyline" methods. Mr. H. N. Brailsford only lashes the tail of his article at us, but his complaint seems to be that we don't use our clubs often enough to justify such large premises. The simple fact is that British people, for the most part, whether at home or abroad, don't alter their way of living to any very great extent. Hence clubs, etc., are pretty empty from Mondays to Thursdays, but fill up at the week-ends to capacity.

As for "militarism," one could spend weeks in the British Zone without ever seeing troops in formation or, indeed, any soldiers obviously on duty except for the "red caps," and they seem principally employed in keeping in check the natural Nazi courtesies of German drivers to other users of the roads !

Hamburg. JOHN STEVENSON

A DAY WITH THE TORIES

SIR,—Perhaps you will allow me to make an observation on Mr. Edelman's references to myself in his entertaining commentary on the Conservative Conference in your issue of last week. I do not quarrel with his metaphor of my "hurdy gurdy," which is surely a most democratic instrument ! But his referenee to my "sneers at trade unions and trade unionists" is completely misleading. If I "sneered" at anyone, it was at individuals who allowed themselves to be "jobbed" for political reasons into appointments for which they had insufficient qualifications. Why Mr. Edelman should assume that these people must be trade unionists I do not know. Personally, I believe that very few, if any, of these gentlemen (and noblemen) are in any greater degree connected with the trade union movement than is Mr. Edelman himself. JOHN BOYD-CARPENTER

House of Commons.

SAVE EUROPE NOW

SIR,—Save Europe Now is opening its third winter campaign for the relief of Europe. The needs are greater than ever—millions in Europe will be worse fed this winter even than during the war, Sir John Boyd Orr has told us from Geneva. Relief supplies, if they are to arrive in time, must be purchased soon, and I write, therefore, to ask your readers for further help for our European Relief Fund.

Of the four beneficiaries of this fund, the Friends Relief Service could spend £20,000 on food immediately, for it is still possible to buy food unsuitable for distribution in the rationing scheme, in the sterling areas of the world. We hope to be able to give the Friends £50,000 over this winter for the purchase of food, clothing and medicines for their work in Austria, France, Germany and Poland. My own organisation, the Ecumenical Refugee Commission needs £6,700 until Christmas to maintain the flow of the medicines we send to Germany and Austria. Save Europe Now Supplies Fund needs money to meet the costs of collecting, handling and shipping the food parcels which we send to nine European countries—Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Rumania and Yugoslavia. Finally, we hope to be able to allow German Educational Reconstruction enough money to carry on the great work they are doing in fostering the rebirth of democratic education in Germany.

These are the needs. Your gift may be earmarked for any one of these societies or funds, all of which are registered as War Charities. I ask you to remember that brotherhood and love know no frontiers and our present difficulties and discomforts help us, I hope, to understand the greater ills of others. Please send your cheques and postal orders made out to "Save Europe Now European Relief Fund," to the Secretary, Save Europe Now, 15 James Street, London, W.C.2.

Gifts of second-hand clothing and shoes, and of rationed food and chocolate, should be sent to Save Europe Now, c/o Davies, Turner and Co., Bourne Street, Pimlico Road, London, S.W.1.

15 James Street, HENRY CARTER,
Covent Garden, W.C.2. *Hon. Treasurer*

MURDER IN GREECE

SIR,—Mr. Pallis accuses Mr. Doganis of being naive. He also assumes that naiveté is a characteristic of your readers, which is unfortunate, since they include many perceptive students of Greek affairs for whom the wiles of the propagandist have little attraction.

The shrinking elegance of his pen fails to hide the casuistic argument which he employs to distinguish between the "official murder" of M. Petkov and what may be described as the official murders of Greek patriots. The first, as Mr. Doganis observes, aroused the indignation of the civilised world; the second ceaselessly take place without a diplomatic voice being raised in protest. The fact that such happenings take place under the aegis of a legally elected Government accentuates its incapacity to govern; and to blame outside nations for the continuance of civil disorder is a gesture of helplessness.

May I venture to put these simple questions to Mr. Pallis in the hope that they will evoke direct replies :

1. Have Greek citizens been beheaded with the cognizance of the Gendarmerie and their heads displayed with medieval horror ?
2. Have many thousands of patriots been torn from their homes at the instance of the Security police ?
3. Have many of these, like General Sarafis, been interned for more than eighteen months without a charge being made against them ?
4. Has the Government, legally elected or otherwise, the moral right to perpetuate barbarities ?
5. Are the people morally wrong to resist them, even by recourse to arms ?

15 New Street, E. H. ATHANASSOGLOU
Bishopsgate.

SIR,—Mr. Pallis in his letter tries to reassure your readers that Mr. Partsalidis's trial "will bear very favourable comparison with that of the late Mr. Petkov." The real value of the assurances of Mr. Pallis and of every Greek official, is proved by the following facts.

Mr. Partsalidis, General Secretary of E.A.M., Mr. Gavrilidis, General Secretary of the Greek Agrarian Party and another 15,000 Athenian democratic citizens, men and women, were taken by the police from their beds, during the night of July 9 and were straight away sent to exile. They were accused *en bloc* by the then Minister of Public Order, Mr. Zervas, as having plotted to overthrow the regime by armed revolt. Moreover, Messrs. Partsalidis and Gavrilidis were branded as the leaders of the conspiracy. The investigation started at once and went on for three months. However, not one of the "conspirators" has yet been brought to trial. On the contrary, as the Athenian press reported on October 7th, the investigating judge was unable to find even the slightest evidence of conspiracy and was compelled to drop the matter altogether. The conspiracy having thus been unmasked as a myth, public opinion in Greece and abroad was entitled to expect that the Greek judicial authorities would order the immediate release of all innocent victims. But no. Apart from the dangerously ill, a number of women and very old men, the bulk of the exiled Athenians (over ten thousand) including Partsalidis, are still kept suffering and starving in Ikaria and the other devil islands of the Aegean. What a tribute to Greek Justice in which Mr. Pallis asks us to trust ! TH. DOGANIS,
E.A.M. Press Correspondent, London
12 Michelham Gardens, Twickenham.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

When Balzac declared that in literature "the important point was not to avoid mistakes but to have a quality that sweeps everything in front of it," not only did he describe his own achievement, which depended on the possession of just that triumphant and overwhelming quality: he also defined the choice that lies, more or less obviously, before every modern writer. Is he to descend to the market-place and seize the chances that it offers him, write profusely and often badly, endeavouring to learn by painful experience, hoping against hope that his talent is sufficiently tough and resilient to withstand the stress and strain of hack work, in the belief that the dangers of seclusion are ultimately more serious than those of over-exercise? Or should he remove himself from the odious hurly-burly, cherish his literary gifts in silence and in solitude, resigned to publishing at infrequent intervals so long as he is sure that nothing he now publishes will afterwards seem unworthy of the exacting standard he has set himself? To become an artist of the second category—a category from which such ruthless and reckless professionals as Balzac, Dickens, Shakespeare are, of course, excluded—a writer must combine extreme natural fastidiousness with an obstinate strength of character given to few human beings. If possible, he must have a private income, and (should that supreme advantage have been denied him) either an unusual capacity for making other people do his odd jobs or the vein of inherited puritanism that we see exemplified in the very different yet complementary careers of T. S. Eliot and James Joyce. Among writers who belong to the second group, Joseph Joubert established a record that still remains unbroken. For Joubert, besides being the most self-critical of men, the most exquisitely self-selective of European aphorists, seldom finished what he had begun to write and published nothing in his lifetime. He might have echoed Villiers de l'Isle—Adam's famous, and perhaps slightly fatuous, *bon mot*: "As for living—our servants will always do that for us !" His business was not to live—though on two occasions he basked in the autumn sunshine of a mild platonic love affair and, from good nature and a sense of duty, twice took public office—but to feel and reflect and discuss and, now and then, in a brief yet studied note, to attempt to capture the essence of his discoveries, emotional and intellectual.

Joubert, in short, was one of those writers who prefer the unsullied margin of the page to the cataract of words that defaces and obscures it:

> I love blank paper more than ever (he wrote), and I no longer wish to give myself the trouble of expressing carefully any thoughts but those worthy of being written upon silk or upon bronze. . . .

Round the career of this extraordinary man, who was born in 1754 and died in 1824, having served, perfunctorily but satisfactorily, as a local magistrate during the Republic and an inspector of schools under Napoleon, but who otherwise whiled away his existence in leisure and retirement, Miss Joan Evans has woven a lucid and entertaining narrative.* She is particularly adroit at conveying the effect of Joubert's Gallic background: for, although the tendencies he displayed were manifestly "Palinuroid," he had none of the romantic intransigeance of Virgil's fated helmsman and, to counterbalance his disdain of life, had inherited many of the solider attributes of the French provincial *bourgeoisie*. Paris often attracted him, and some of his happiest and most exciting days were spent there; but he had been born and brought up at Montignac in the Périgord, and spent much of his later life near Sens, in the little town of Villeneuve. He was an excellent son, a good father, a faithful and indulgent husband. His neighbours loved and respected him; and his frequentations in the Parisian great world never bred in him a distaste for simple country pleasures, the warmth of his own fireside, the beauty of farms and gardens. His mood was pensive and generally melancholic; but his melancholy coloured the landscape of his mind as an autumnal haze softens the outlines of some richly cultivated hillside, in the austere yet fertile region that during his impressionable youth he had known and loved best.

Strange that a man who thought so little of publicity, and avoided it all his life, should have made a friend of Chateaubriand, an artist who "wiped his eyes with the public" and, whether he exulted or wept, usually did so in the amphitheatre! Yet to the end they were close companions; and, after Joubert's death, Chateaubriand, with his gift of the evocative phrase, examined his old friend's personal genius and summed him up concisely. Joubert (he remarked) had been "*un égoïste . . . qui ne s'occupait que des autres*": hence the mystificatory title, *The Unselfish Egoist*, that Miss Evans in accordance with the modern whim has selected for her volume. It was Chateaubriand's task, moreover, to read through, and make selections from, the vast accumulation of papers that Joubert left behind him. The editor was already old and, in another memorable phrase, spoke of the saddening murmur of the memories they called up: "*J'écoute derrière moi les souvenirs, comme les bruissements de la vague sur une plage lointaine.*" But he persevered; and a small sheaf of the *Pensées* was eventually printed for private circulation. Their success was unexpected; and since that moment Joubert's still small voice has gradually increased in volume, till we have come to recognise him as an exceedingly individual, highly gifted spirit, whose utterance winds its way like a delicate flute solo through an age of violence and discord. Matthew Arnold introduced him to English readers; and in the last twenty-five years a French scholar, M. André Beaunier, has written his biography, edited his correspondence and resurrected a mass of important new material from the pages of his note-books.

Miss Evans, who acknowledges her indebtedness to the work of M. Beaunier, is concerned less with Joubert's importance as a stylist and a critic, than with his original charm as a human being and with the oddity of the experiences in which his peculiar temperament involved him. What those experiences lacked in adventurous variety they made up in intensity. Joubert's marriage was unromantic—a reflection of everything about him that was solidest and staidest: Madame Joubert was a good cook, and, no doubt, a very good listener. But during middle age he fell victim to a grand romantic passion. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he did not fall, so much as allow himself to subside quietly and gracefully, laying his heart at the idol's feet with an urbane and philosophic gesture. The idol was Pauline de Beaumont, a connection of that Madame de Sérilly of whom Miss Evans has already written in *The Pursuit of Happiness*. Like Joubert, she was *une âme bien née*: unlike Joubert, she was an aristocrat by birth as well as temperament and, although she belonged to a section of the French ruling class that had helped to prepare the Revolution, she had lost her home and friends—her father had been killed in the September massacres: her mother and brother had been guillotined—and, when Joubert first encountered her, she was sitting, alone and disconsolate, on the threshold of a peasant's cottage. Joubert was at once captivated. He pitied her delicacy, responded to her sensibility and admired the keen critical intelligence by which her sensibility was accompanied. Soon he was writing her long and tender letters. Expressions of love were kept under control, or replaced by a tone of affectionate solicitude. He implored her to care for her health and urged that she should overcome a dark strain of constitutional melancholy. "One must learn to love life," he insisted. And elsewhere: "I am well content to tell you that I cannot admire you at leisure, and hold you in high esteem as I should wish, until I perceive in you the most beautiful of all forms of courage, the courage to be happy."

Pauline de Beaumont recovered her faith in life—recovered it, at least, to the extent of falling violently in love with Chateaubriand, or "The Cat" as his friends called him in the little *salon* that Pauline set up in the rue Neuve du Luxembourg after her return to Paris. Joubert was pained but understanding. He did nothing so vulgar as to strike back; and, when he and his wife received an invitation to join the lovers at their country house, he brought with him a copy of Kant, a philosopher he detested, which he used to fortify himself against jealousy as he strolled to and fro along the garden paths. Pauline's image slowly receded, though he never ceased to write to her: that of Louise de Vintmille, who was as robust and sanguine as Pauline had been fine-drawn, imperceptibly weakened without entirely killing it. Again Joubert's passion was largely imaginative. He could not forget the silken rustle that her dress had made one momentous July day when they walked together in the Tuileries, or the scent of the great bouquet of tuberoses he had bought her at a flower-stall. Such were the impressions, such the emotional experiences, that Joubert really valued. Firm in his conviction that the life of the spirit was the only real life, that it was more rewarding to love than to be loved, that the pursuit of self-respect and peace of mind—"*son repos et l'estime de soi-même*"—must be his only guiding principle, he could afford to discount, if he did not affect to despise, the facile successes of a romantic adventurer like Chateaubriand. He continued to appreciate his friend, but saw plainly all around him. And, as soon as the *Génie du Christianisme* appeared in every bookshop, Joubert composed several critical pages, the more devastating in their analysis because the style in which they were written was so polite and measured.

> He lacks (observed the candid friend) . . . a kind of sincerity which one only has, and only can have, when one lives much with oneself, when one consults oneself, listens to oneself, and when this intimate sense has become very lively by the practice it has been given and the use that has been made of it. He has, so to speak, all his faculties turned outwards. . . He does not speak with himself, he hardly ever listens to himself, he never questions himself, unless it be to discover whether the external parts of his soul, I mean his taste and his imagination, are content, whether the thought is well rounded, the phrases fine-sounding. . . . He addresses himself to others; it is for them only, and not for himself, that he writes; it is similarly their approval, rather than his own, that he seeks. Thus it follows that his talent will never make him happy. . . . His life is another matter. He composes it, or rather he lets it arrange itself, in quite another fashion. He writes only for others, and lives only for himself. . . .

Thus, in a few neat sentences, the contrast between Joubert and Chateaubriand—and between the types of character and the types of literature that they epitomise—is coolly, clearly set forth. Chateaubriand certainly lived for himself, and seemed to write for others: Joubert was content to plan his life with a scrupulous—maybe an over-scrupulous—regard for the obligations that he thought he owed to others, but, as often as he wrote, listened only to the advice of his own interior promptings and was satisfied, if he was satisfied at all, by the approval or applause that he himself awarded. But then we reach an uncomfortable dilemma. Chateaubriand's work set the pulse of Europe fluttering—a whole generation responded to his influence; while Joubert sat at home in bed, wearing a warm night-cap, expecting to "breathe his last in the middle of a beautiful phrase"—some phrase that he might or might not, as the mood took him, decide to commit to paper—or, with umbrella and muffler, pottered around the streets of Paris, absorbed in a continuous reverie, admiring the striped tulips or browsing at the bookstalls. Which was the more important of the two, the more valuable, the more praiseworthy? "Take your choice, and be damned to you!" mutters the sombre and haggard goddess who presides, with a saturnine smile, over the literary destinies of young men.

Peter Quennell

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* *The Unselfish Egoist. A Study of Joseph Joubert.* By Joan Evans. Longmans, 10*s.* 6*d.*

THE FILIBUSTER

The Remarkable Expedition. By OLIVIA MANNING. *Heinemann.* 15*s.*

Exploration demands integrity: like the arts it is the pursuit of truth, and like the arts too exploration has its commercial fringes, where the objectives become multiplied, diffused and dubious—notoriety, a career, or simply cash. In this international world of the commercial explorer Stanley holds one of the most prominent positions. There is something almost majestic in the enormity and crudity of this bizarre Welsh orphan and American newspaper man who set out to rescue two great men, Livingstone and Emin Pasha (neither of whom were in any real need of his attention), who helped to found a state in central Africa notorious for its cruelty, who murdered almost as many men in his filibustering expeditions as any European monarch of his day, and who died under the shadow of the same moral suspicions as Casement, probably with more justice. His books were as wildly successful as his African exploits; in both he succeeded where better men failed and in both he made the same violent assault on his objectives. If he set out to reach a given point he never failed to reach it: in his cliché ridden prose he hacks his way forward and in his stale epithets we can almost hear the mechanical rattle of his Maxim gun.

The expedition to rescue Emin Pasha from the Mahdi's armies is, for some reason, far less familiar to the public than his earlier expedition in search of Livingstone, though at the time it caused an equal controversy. Indeed none of Stanley's expeditions ended quietly. Miss Manning has told the story of the Emin Pasha expedition coolly, collectedly, and more or less correctly (there is a false attribution of a letter on page 38), but Stanley is not an entirely suitable character for subdued irony. He demands a heavier brush. Wassermann in his Teutonic way was really happier with this subject and with the odd mystery that bulked larger in the years that followed than the fate of poor undecided Emin Pasha: the mystery of what happened to Stanley's rear-column.

It may be remembered that Stanley, who had been accompanied by several young amateurs of good birth and no experience (some had even paid money to accompany him), left his rear-column behind in central Africa at Yambuya, some hundred miles of forest away from Lake Albert Nyanza, where he planned to meet Emin. They were to gather transport from the Arab chief, Tippoo Tib, and to follow him—but the instructions he left them were confusing. After more than a year's absence he returned to the camp and found the rear-column had hardly moved from where he had—so their defenders claimed—abandoned them. Major Barttelot, who had been left in charge, had been murdered by his men, and of the other Englishmen attached to the column one had simply gone home (Mr. Rose Troup), one was dying (Mr. Jameson), one was absent, having evacuated a great deal of the stores to the coast (Mr. Ward), and only the medical orderly Bonny was still *in situ* with more than half his Africans dead: a complete breakdown of morale.

There followed a long series of books (a good many of which, among them Mr. Troup's apologia and Major Barttelot's diaries, Miss Manning seems to have neglected) attacking and justifying the rear-column, but leaving a curious fog of uncertainty. Why had the rear-column made no attempt to follow Stanley? Had Stanley deliberately left them with uncertain instructions? In this fog move all kinds of legendary horrors: even cannibalism was whispered. Miss Manning has tidied up the story, but at the cost of the darker shades. We hear nothing in her book of the hysterical sadism in the Yambuya camp, the appalling floggings that preceded the murder of Barttelot, the background to those grim simple sentences in Rose Troup's diary: "John Henry received three hundred lashes this morning. . . . John Henry died to-day." Nor do we hear of that other poor starving wretch, Burgari, who stole half a goat, was given a hundred and fifty lashes and was promised "another flogging later on." He escaped from the camp, was recaptured and sentenced to death. "He took the whole thing quite coolly . . . and waited, with his head slightly bent, for the signal to fire." Stanley meanwhile was shooting and looting his way towards the Lake and towards the gentle disinterested Emin whose whole career, as Livingstone's before him, was a condemnation of his rescuers. Through the falling lashes in the Yambuya camp, the stutter of Stanley's Maxim, one remembers the dying Livingstone on his last journey, "if the good Lord permits me to put a stop to the enormous evils in the inland slave trade, I shall not grudge my hunger and toils."

In the heat of the controversy that followed Stanley's expedition—the interpretation of orders, what had happened to Tippoo Tib and the stores—the real issue was obscured on both sides: the atrocities that no Arab slave trader could have surpassed which were yet perpetrated by Livingstone's fellow countrymen. It is a pity that Stanley's latest biographer should also have forgotten John Henry.

EDWARD BEAVER

SENSE OR SENSIBILITY IN POLITICS

Reason and Unreason in Society. By MORRIS GINSBERG. *Longmans.* 15*s.*

The Comforts of Unreason. By RUPERT CRAYSHAW-WILLIAMS. *Kegan Paul.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

In an essay on Hobhouse's contribution to sociology Professor Ginsberg tells us that Hobhouse agreed with Comte in believing that the "emergence of sociology as a positive science" was "a crucial point in the history of man which as it matures should render increasingly possible an expansion of the area of conscious control over the trends of human development." Professor Ginsberg seems to agree with this rosy sociological optimism. In Comte's time, one can see, the complacency was excusable and even in the twilight liberalism of Hobhouse, but it is difficult to see how anyone can believe this in the world today, illuminated by Marx, Freud, two great wars, fascism, and communism. The explanation is probably that here we have three eminent sociologists enjoying the cold comforts of unreason by scientifically convincing themselves of the epoch-making importance of sociology.

There is no evidence of the expansion of the area of conscious control over the trends of human development since Comte's day; on the contrary, the evidence points in the other direction. Not only is the world of the 20th century more unreasonable than that of the 19th, but whereas our ancestors at least believed that it was better to act rationally than irrationally, large numbers of people today believe the opposite. In 1811 a novel, *Sense and Sensibility* by A Lady, was published and Miss Austen's moral was the blessings of sense and the dangers of sensibility. When Marianne and Willoughby ridicule Colonel Brandon, the model of a man of sense, he is defended by Elinor who says that he "is a sensible man; and sense will always have attractions for me . . . He has seen a great deal of the world; has been abroad; has read, and has a thinking mind." To have a thinking mind—that Jane Austen and her contemporaries considered to be the essence of sense or reason in the individual Colonel Brandons and the generalized "human being." It was highly desirable, therefore, they thought, in man the political animal. This belief and the further belief in the possibility of a rational, civilised society consciously controlled and directed by the thinking mind of men persisted for another 100 years. It is arguable that the revolt against reason as an instrument of government and a standard of social values began at the end of the 19th century, but the war of 1914 clearly marks a watershed. After 1918 the rule of unreason began firmly to establish itself over the greater part of the earth. It was not that the 19th century world was reasonable or civilized, but it at least tried to be; the world of Hitler, Mussolini, and authoritarianism generally tried not to be, and succeeded beyond even its own expectations. Fascism, Nazism, and Communism made opinion and truth in politics a criminal offence and promoted emotion, primarily the emotion of hatred, to be the directing force in government and human development. The progress in this trend of human development, as Professor Ginsberg would call it, may be observed today in many directions: the proceedings of the Security Council, the Fascist meetings in Dalston, the Punjab, Egypt, Palestine, the world-wide search for scapegoats upon whose wretched heads each nation, pact, or sect with savage hatred seeks to place the disastrous consequences of its own unreason.

To what extent theory affects practice or practice theory in politics is a nice question, but it is unquestionable that, at any particular time or place, you will find a large number of experts—sociologists, political philosophers, historians, and other scientists—supplying the most ingenious and brilliant theories to show why it is reasonable and even inevitable that their contemporaries should act and continue to act with such sombre savagery and unreason. M. Benda wrote a book about the betrayal of civilisation by the intellectuals, but the process has gone far deeper since it was written. Moeller van der Bruck was conveniently the prophet of Nazism and Spengler later heard, like Peter, the crow of the Nazi cock. Freud has proved a godsend with his super ego, ego, and id and the unconscious mind which has been found to be, like Habakkuk, capable of anything except reason. And so the psycho-analyst turned sociologist, or the sociologist turned psycho-analyst, complacently proves that, since we can only use our reason to rationalise our unreason, there is nothing to do about it but get on with the good work of killing one another wholesale.

The facts are clear enough; what one would like to know is why they are as they are. If Professor Ginsberg's view of sociology is correct, it ought to be able to help us to understand and rationally to control our social destiny. His book unfortunately throws no light upon the subject. It tells us a good deal about sociology and sociologists, but practically nothing about reason and unreason in society. His learning and seriousness are immense and admirable, but there is an academical aridity about his subjects, method, and style which perhaps accounts for the fact that the development of social reason has been in inverse proportion to the development of sociology.

Mr. Crawshay-Williams's admirable book, which is not only serious but entertaining, is a real contribution to the subject. By analysis it shows us some of the reasons why we so often prefer unreason to reason. It is largely, as his title indicates, a question of comfort. Reason is mainly a question of facing facts, and if facts are unpleasant—and they so often are—one way of evading them is to escape into a world of fantasy and to use reason solely for the purpose of proving to ourselves that the unreal is real. The infinite ingenuity which we use to deceive ourselves must be studied in this book. It suggests one reflection. I do not think that the philosophers and scientists have proved that man in society cannot act rationally. But even if he cannot, our knowledge of social processes points to one conclusion or rule of practice. It is the unpleasantness of social facts which induces us to resort to the social comfort of unreason. Therefore if we want to diminish the use of unreason in politics we must concentrate on the removal of the unpleasantness, on making ourselves socially comfortable. And in the long run the comforts of unreason are, in politics, illusory. If you do not face unpleasant facts politically, they have a way of becoming more and more unpleasant.

LEONARD WOOLF

NEW NOVELS

Of Love and Hunger. By J. MACLAREN ROSS. *Allan Wingate.* 9s. 6d.

Prelude to a Certain Midnight. By GERALD KERSH. *Heinemann.* 8s. 6d.

This is the Way. By GEOFFREY COTTERELL. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 10s. 6d.

A Mountain Boyhood. By ANDRÉ CHAMSON. *John Lehmann.* 7s. 6d.

Inside a cameo, without brush or pencil, but using only lengths of human hair, blonde and brunette, the Victorian artist in *bibelots* would sometimes contrive a picture on a well-worn pastoral theme—a poet and a young woman standing beside an urn, underneath a weeping willow tree.

I was reminded of these hair pictures whilst reading Mr. J. Maclaren Ross's new novel, *Of Love and Hunger*. Here we have a small, neat, decorative work in the romantic idiom of to-day. The theme the same as that in the cameo: a young man and girl in melancholy mood, posturing together in a nostalgic setting. Mr. Maclaren Ross's young man, wearing the dirty mackintosh of the commission salesman, and his girl (imported from America), appear—not under a weeping willow but in a disintegrating lodging "bed-sitter." Beside them, instead of an urn, is a bookshelf of brightly coloured Audens and Isherwoods. The medium for this picture—no whit less recalcitrant and unmalleable than lengths of human hair—is the dumb-ox monosyllable. Well . . . there you have it.

The eyes of the young man to whom I described this book sparkled at my very first words. "A vacuum-cleaner salesman! Oh, *do* lend it to me. I adore that!" And so for the sake of all those others who feel the same I can give this assurance: everything in this most modish romance is quite in order. The other blokes discussing Hitler over *ersatz* coffee at a milk bar (the time is the late 'thirties); the vignettes of the landladies of the little seaside resort (out of season) where it all takes place; the lousy weather; the lousy behaviour of the heroine, the lousy bad luck on every page; everything.

The girls are in order too. Functional. Utility models. This one, Jackie, for instance: she comes in a "colour-scheme to match the shop" (where she works). She has "good breast-works," good tongue-work, good leg-work—"everything to taste." Her sex drill is in order. "She knew her stuff, no doubt about that . . . her teeth didn't get in the way and she knew what to do with her tongue," etc. "A kiss like a mouthful of rice pudding," and so on.

The billing and cooing of the lovers is in order too:

> "Let's get out of this bloody awful room and have a drink."
> "All right."
> "God, what a town."
> "It's pretty dull."
> "*Dull.* My God."

I will leave it to somebody else to trace the family tree of *Of Love and Hunger*. I seem to remember that two important ancestors surely, Edward Upward's rotary duplicator and *Hangover Square*, by Patrick Hamilton, were both of them original, freshly observed pictures. But now this particular theme seems to have reached the hair cameo level; and I for one would much like to see Mr. Maclaren Ross's considerable talents (remembering his brilliant *A Bit of a Smash*, for instance) employed once again on literature with rather more flavour, and rather less *chi-chi*.

A most enjoyable book, a satirical comedy of manners, that I have found this week is *This is the Way* by Geoffrey Cotterell. It is the history of the fight of Arthur Danby, V.C., of the First World War to build a Social Centre in the suburb of Marcham, a fight which lasts for twenty years until it is broken up by the Second World War. I won't reveal the neat twist at the end of the book. Mr. Cotterell's canvas is a huge one, and crowded with figures, from the Marcham Mayor and big wigs, down through the Vicarage, and the shops in the High Street, to the Marcham daily helps. A wonderfully substantial world is created by the author telling us simply everything he can think of about his people. We know their incomes, what they paid down for the partnerships, who their parents were and what they did, what popular songs they sang at their parties, their scores at tennis, what they ate—both when alone at home and when they went to a dinner dance up in London, the methods they used to reduce their fat, in what they invested their money, and their views on the cricketers and boxers of the day. . . .

Prelude to a Certain Midnight, by Gerald Kersh, is also laid in the years between the two World Wars. Rather than a story it is a Panorama of clever, mannered caricatures; caricatures of the habituées of the Bar Bacchus, a bohemian pub in Soho. There are critics, gentlemanly thieves, *déclassée* old trout from county life, detectives, tailors . . . all lit up bleakly and cut and slashed over blackly by the wavering shadows and lights of Kersh's sordid Soho. A certain thread of plot moreover runs through it all, on account of the horrid sex murder of the little daughter of one of the characters—one S. Sabbattani, a dealer in secondhand clothes. Until the great party scene at the end, we remain in suspense as to the murderer's identity.

Mr. Kersh is certainly an artist in macabre. Here is one of the oldest habituées of the Bar Bacchus, "Catchy" (once a beautiful trollop with a heart of gold, but now a ruined old soak):

> Those bright, brown eyes that used to be so steady and candid against the baby-blue whites may now be likened to a couple of cockroaches desperately swimming in two saucers of boiled rhubarb.

And here is another figure, taken at random, who turns up at a party:

> Sir Storrington was a wide, flat man shaped like a bed-bug, who crept into the conversation and crawled out between rounds of drinks.

A Topolski-like scene it is; "good theatre," with its cuteness and acid brilliance leaving a metallic taste in the mouth.

A Mountain Boyhood by André Chamson—short and in a way slight though it is, a collection of pieces concerning the author's boyhood,—is a book of a different quality altogether. It is most exquisitely translated by John Rodker.

Guided by M. Chamson we climb up the mountain-side, leave the clatter of the Café Royal and the bright chat of the Marcham Golf Club far below, to breathe a rarer air. At the first paragraph we have dropped, into the abyss, the colloquial jargon in which the other three books are written. How insufficient it would prove to negotiate this author's range of idea and feeling! For his subject is the whole man—not merely his modes and his manners. M. Chamson deals in conceptions. He hunts the Omnipotent Idea through the hurricanes of the Cevennes.

I have heard it said that Chamson is a realistic writer. But how this is to misunderstand him! He takes us up over the rock wall step by step it is true; he faces us with "chasms of the valleys," he points out "the sky cutting through the windows of a ruined house" on the far slope. He makes us look down and see how "the earth rights itself like a huge swing," he makes us feel "the wind by its own speed plaited like whip-cord" and lets us listen and hear "the passage of some immense commotion, higher than the trees, there where only the ponderous masses of air could sway down on the compacted

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air ”—yes. But, with a power of writing and a richness of overtone that is extraordinarily exciting, he shifts our focus, as an artist should, stealthily but vertiginously, so as to show us not simply rocks and sticks and stones, but the idea of the wind's epic onslaught, the significance to us of the “ millenial gales ” and the “ subterranean shocks,” the meaning, for us, of these primeval sublimities.

Not all of this book is exciting. But I feel that Chamson is a writer whom, if one is interested in serious contemporary literature, one most certainly must not miss.

JULIA STRACHEY

HAWORTH REVISITED

The Brontës. By PHYLLIS BENTLEY. *Home and Van Thal.* 6s.

The Brontë legend becomes no less extraordinary as it gains in truth. Miss Bentley, in an admirable short study of the Brontës and their works, has been able to make use of one of the most absorbing pieces of recent literary research—the transcription and analysis of a hundred or so tiny manuscript books of their early writing.

These contain the chronicles of two imaginary kingdoms, Angria belonging to Charlotte and Branwell, Gondal (of which, unfortunately, little has survived) to Emily and Anne. They are more than juvenile writings; (Emily at twenty-seven was still deep in Gondal, and never really left it) and they strikingly indicate the difference in the temperament and outlook of the authors. *Wuthering Heights* is a natural outcome of Gondal, a wild, northern land of “ stern inexorable logic,” where evil exists as well as good, but begets its own doom. But in Angria, an escape world furnished and peopled with a violent and theatrical magnificence, “ actions which excited Charlotte's severest censure in real life were not merely condoned but enjoyed.” Contemporary readers who found *Jane Eyre* unwomanly might well have been amazed at the lawless passions of the Byronic Duke of Zamorna and his paramours, recorded in the childish, meticulous handwriting that all the Brontës shared. At the same time it is uncanny to see how Charlotte anticipated in these narratives not only characters and situations from her novels, but the very phrases of her letters to M. Heger.

Miss Bentley makes the point that the Brontës were all thoroughly experienced writers before their first adult books were started. But if this intense literary day-dreaming equipped them as novelists, it unfitted them in varying degrees for life in the normal world. Perhaps, too, as Miss Bentley suggests, the “ terrible expenditure of energy ” exhausted them and destroyed their resistance to death. It was undoubtedly their substitute for living. Branwell, the weakest in character and in gifts, was least able to cope with the outside world. An Angrian manuscript, *Charles Wentworth's Visit to Verdopolis,* written shortly after his return from London where he had gone to study art, speaks of Wentworth's “ instinctive fear of ending his pleasure by approaching reality ” ; he will not enter the big buildings nor present his letters of introduction. This seems to provide the key to more of Branwell's story than the mystery of his ineffectual sojourn in London.

Miss Bentley's essays on the sisters, particularly Anne, are at once vivid and just. Her study of Charlotte offers most scope for a little wholesome disagreement; the reader may value *Villette* more and *Shirley* less highly than does Miss Bentley. (What Shirley lacks is not strength but a centre; this, to my mind, is because Charlotte is for once not the heroine). In the portrait of Emily, stress is laid not so much on her detachment and independence, her wonderful hard clarity and freedom of thought, but on her tolerance and compassion. Severe with herself, Emily was not censorious of others (though one must recall that she did avoid all contact with people outside her family circle).

> Do I despise the timid deer
> Because his limbs are fleet with fear ?
> Or would I mock the wolf's death howl
> Because his form is gaunt and foul ?
> Or, hear with joy the leveret's cry
> Because it cannot bravely die ?

So she wrote in 1846. But it was a feeling unaccompanied by softness or sentiment; such weakness she despised. Miss Bentley touches on an interesting theme in comparing her to Conrad; both concerned with the strife between the human spirit and the powers of darkness; both, too, making the human spirit prevail.

In the works of the three Brontës, whose background and experiences were almost identical, the differences are significant, for they show the workings of the creative imagination. Anne records; Charlotte consciously transforms; but who can trace the original experiences in Emily's writing? This is one of the most useful analyses made by Miss Bentley. She has the great merit as a writer on the Brontës of being neither patronising nor possessive, and she does not indulge in the game of speculation without some honest evidence. Attractively written, concise, yet abounding in ideas, her book is a model of the short critical biography.

NAOMI LEWIS

THE QUARRELLING ARMIES

Missing from the Record. By COLONEL DICK MALONE, O.B.E. *Collins.* 12s. 6d.

The recriminations after a victory are often as noisy and bitter as those which follow defeat. Even a single battle, fought by an army nationally homogeneous, will leave behind it a multitude of jealousies between units and formations, apart from the semi-permanent mistrust felt by all fighting troops for the higher command, the staffs, and the services supporting them. The importance attached nowadays to the press and the radio has served to exacerbate susceptibilities and has made more than ever difficult the conduct of a Grand Alliance in which somebody is always being given the credit for somebody else's success.

Colonel Malone, therefore, deserves nothing but praise for setting himself to explain the misunderstandings caused by ill-judged publicity campaigns from one or other of the Allies during the invasion of Sicily, Italy, and Northern Europe. He has the knowledge and the specialised experience to de-bunk many of the more persistent nationalist legends that have grown up during and since the war; the failure of the Allied press to mention the Canadians among the assaulting troops in Sicily; the unjust criticism of Eighth Army's remarkable drive to relieve the hard-pressed American Fifth Army in the Salerno beachhead; above all, the belittlement in the American newspapers of the heavy fighting of the British and Canadians in Normandy which pinned down the enemy's main strength and made the American break-through on the right comparatively easy.

Apart from a short period of regimental soldiering in South-Eastern Command and some battle experience as Brigade Major of the Canadian 2nd Brigade in Sicily, the author was engaged mainly in liaison and press duties, first as one of “ Monty's ” personal liaison officers, and then as Chief of Canadian Public Relations both in Italy and Northern Europe. His own distinguished contribution is handled unobtrusively and modestly, but it is clear that his book is only a prolongation

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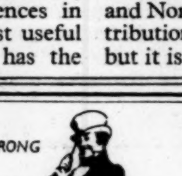

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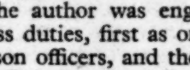

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of his wartime task of interpreting British, Canadians and Americans to one another, and of smoothing down touchy generals and avoiding clashes of temperament between Allies. He tells that story well, though in a style better adapted to a gangster novel than to a record of what was, very largely, diplomatic activity. The analysis of the misunderstandings between the Canadian and British generals, and between generals and politicians, is quite admirable; it is extremely enlightening to the English reader and it should succeed in calming the passions of the Canadian. Much of the book, however, expresses too exclusively the point of view of the highly placed staff officer. The "Monty" anecdotage is a shade too intimate to appeal to the ordinary man—or soldier—though it may successfully show why he was adored by his own staff. Similarly Colonel Malone is apt to talk of formations—Armies and Army Corps—when he is thinking exclusively of their Headquarters' staffs and this sometimes seems to detract from the reality of his narrative.

It would not be fair, however, to over-emphasise these weaknesses, or the occasional over-exuberant Canadian patriotism of an author so conscientiously aware of his unique opportunity to explain British and Americans to each other. Those who fought in these campaigns will find many of their long-standing grievances against the press soothed and healed; and few can fail to be impressed by the account of the difficulties and triumphs of newspaper work on the battlefield.

WILLIAM MCELWEE

THE CRUELTY OF THE SIGHTED

My Eyes Have a Cold Nose. By HECTOR CHEVIGNY. *Joseph.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The jacket of this book shows a dog with a spectral man behind it: the dog, you see, has been trained to be the eyes of a blind man. Hence the title, so whimsically sentimental as to put me off reading the book. It turns out, however, to be one of the least sentimental works one could find, and the dog does not appear till four-fifths of the way through.

Mr. Chevigny is an American, by profession a writer for the radio, who at the age of something under forty became blind. With cool lucidity he describes his feelings when he was told he would not see again, the difficulties entailed by blindness, the methods by which he learnt to overcome many of these, and the effect upon his emotions and opinions. This is a book rich in interest and, I may add, the reverse of depressing.

Mr. Chevigny offers a number of suggestions, which ought not to be necessary, about the treatment of the newly blinded. First, a test of hearing, since the ears can to an extraordinary degree perform many duties of the eyes. (Mr. Chevigny's hearing, when at last he discovered it was faulty, was much improved by dentistry). Secondly, a test of tactile responses. (He struggled to learn Braille with his right hand for some while before discovering that the left was much more sensitive.) His chief criticism is focused on the general attitude to the blind. We who are sighted treat them as helpless and therefore tragic: we enjoy feeling pity, and glow with self-complacency when given the chance to offer, once in a way, some slight help, though not the help they need, which is help to enter into ordinary economic competition with other people. We thus, for reasons less creditable then they seem, tempt the blind to fall into a demoralising invalidism, a temptation that a large proportion of human beings find irresistible. "Pity is the luxury of the giver and the destroyer of the recipient." Mr. Chevigny explores this theme with a trenchancy likely to give offence to many of the blind as well as of the sighted. He seems to be hardly aware how violently he is quarrelling with Christian morality. It is usually believed that the crucial difference between Christian and humanist or rationalist ethics lies in the region of sex; but even more important, I suggest, is the contrast between the respective attitudes to pride, which the Christian condemns as a deadly sin. Whereas the Stoics deprecated pity as destructive to the tranquillity of him who feels it, Mr. Chevigny regards it as an attack on the independence, personality and pride of its recipient. His criticism of the "institutionalisation" of the blind is another point deserving particular attention.

Mr. Chevigny describes sardonically the alarm excited by his determination to resume his ordinary life. This he has done with conspicuous success, chiefly through his resolution, but largely, too, owing to his use of a guide dog. He gives a fascinating account of the "Seeing Eye School," which trains not only dogs but their users, and reveals the degree of independence that such dogs can confer upon the blind. (Incidentally he declares that Sir Ian Fraser failed to persuade the directors of St. Dunstan's of the value of these dogs. One hopes that this is a mistaken statement, but I have never seen such a dog in London. We have, however, a Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, to which readers of this book will want to subscribe.)

When he enjoyed the use of his eyes, Mr. Chevigny was by his own account most conventionally minded, and proud of it. Now he is critical of many accepted notions. He has become alive, for instance, to the wicked absurdity of colour-prejudice. He asked a man to have luncheon with him, and learnt that he was a Negro only from the answer, "I don't know whether they will serve me." Some restaurants, inconceivable as it seems, refuse also to admit guide dogs, and fellow-feeling about such exclusions reinforced Mr. Chevigny's indignation with a prejudice based merely on a quality imperceptible to him. "The colour of hair, the shade of skin, the shape of nose—what can perceive them but the eye? It takes hearing to perceive what is in the heart and mind, and civilised man is too busy using his eye to listen." Thus blindness opened the eyes of his mind.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

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Light essay writing is an urbane art not much in favour today. We are not urbane. We prefer to take our writers' sentiments, whether black or white (green or orange, Mr. Doyle would say), undiluted by humour or detachment. But to those who accept the convention, Mr. Doyle's book makes the easiest possible reading, not only when he is being deliberately humorous, but in those essays that have a core of information: on Old and Middle English poetry, for example, or on the pastimes of fifty years ago in Northern Ireland. And, like everyone else, he is best of all on his own crafts, banking and writing.

Mr. Doyle takes care to disarm the critical reader in his title. But, serious or not as a writer, he is real enough as a person. He dislikes limited editions, lying, after-dinner speeches, library subscribers (who don't buy books), and carrying parcels. He is philosophical about politics, snobbery, married life, growing old, and the irreverence of the younger generation. He likes the communal life of the small town, accuracy, moderation, amateur singing at parties, early English poetry, dialect words, old wine and old books, being a grandfather. This makes him sound like Mr. Hardcastle. Undoubtedly he would prefer to be thought of as Mr. Bennet. But it will not do. Mr. Doyle, whether by nature or by continual simulation, is too genial for satire. His is not a major art, but within its limits he knows how to be pleasant company and to present a point of view.

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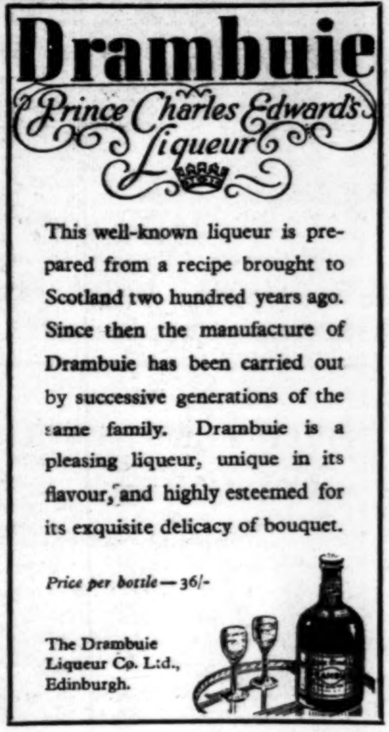

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No. 921

Set by T. C. Worsley

A prize of six guineas is offered for an epitaph on a dead Pet in seven lines of rhymed verse. Cats or dogs are excluded and competitors should attempt to catch the spirit of the Greek Anthology rather than that of the Pets' cemetery. Entries by October 28.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 918

Set by Thomas Smallbones

Six guineas are offered for the opening paragraph (limit 200 words) of a novel of the kind the competitor most dislikes.

Report by Thomas Smallbones

We are said all to have one book in us; evidently we nearly all have one horrible novel. But I hadn't realised until I read the numerous entries just how many species of detestable novels there are, each with its subdivision. Among those offered, for example, I noted: The Historical novel, lush, technicolour, or modern dress flip; the Saga novel, family, business or firm; the Proletarian novel, dialect, plain dismal or noble savage; the Sex novel, rich and ripe, shy and dirty or adolescent; the Tough novel, Bowery, Soho or just tough; the Regional, Far Flung Empire, Russia or the Deep South; the Romantic novel, suburban, coronetted or understated (ex R.A.F.). The most popular choice for the most detestable (the ambivalence is evident in the writing) was for tough sado-masochism. Historicals, too, were well represented but a bit over-done, I thought, if that is possible. I award two guineas to the first entry printed and one guinea each to the succeeding four. But I should like to congratulate the competitors as a whole for the brilliance of their invention, and wish I could publish all of the twenty who made up the short list.

FIRST PRIZE

I wish someone had told me. I wish someone had said, that first Spring morning, that I should last see Vernon Ganderton sprawled on the rocks below Spume Tor with the riddle of Jennings and Miss Oscroft in his eternal keeping. I wish someone had said. Just a hint, a halting sentence, a few mumbled words, and all would have been so different . . . And the sycamores. Why did they not whisper that in their shade I was to crush to me the fragrance that was Blodwen Passmore and hear from her lips, when not stilled with kisses, the truth about Walter, and Mrs. Merridew, and their strange madness that magical summer at Hythe? They knew. The sycamores knew. These things were written there, but they held their peace . . . And the flagstones. Why sprang they not up to bar the Higham Ferrars road that February night? Why did they not cry: "No, no; she is not at Higham Ferrars. She is at Birmingham with her aunt, or so she said." Why gave they no warning? Why? Why? But I go too fast . . .

ARTHUR MARSHALL

I'm standing at the corner of 42nd Street and 5th Avenue, when a little guy with a scar on his kisser comes up to me and says:

"You Lefty?"

"Sure I'm Lefty," I tell him.

"I'm Joe," the little guy says, "I jerk the soda-fount at Nick's drugstore."

"That's great," I say, "so what?"

The little guy just looks at me and at a cop watching a couple of dogs getting acquainted with each other. Then he speaks to me in a low sorta voice.

"There's a dame feeding her tapewoim at my joint," he says, "I reckon I've seen her putting on the nosebag with Moey, when he was still kicking."

I pick up my earholes.

"Dame, eh? Moey eh?" I grab him by the shiny lapels of his 3 dollar-25 cents coat. "You Kidding?"

"See for yourself, Lefty," the little guy says to me and brushes his coat.

"Thanks I will," I say and so we walk over to Nick's, the sort of place where jerks kill their hangovers.

ROBERT MULLER

Well, this was it. Soon he'd be stepping off of the day coach and there'd be the old place, just like it had been before he went on the draft. Main Street, and old Sam Maynard rocking on his stoop, and likely still cussin' out the Gov'ment. And then—the Carsons' place, and maybe Lyn leaning out the window, waving. Lyn, just the kid next door, the kid you played with when you were only a punk; the kid you dated when you were both Sophomores at Plainsville High—cokes at the corner drugstore, wienies and Mocha cake under the cottonwoods; the kid who was rooting for you right along when you got your Letter at Half-Back; Lyn, the girl you carried in your heart out there in the Pacific, crouching in your foxhole, waiting for the goddamned yellow-bellies—you, just one of the little guys, yet part of a great Purpose, called Democracy, which meant, along with other things, securing for old Sam Maynard the privilege to keep right on cussin' out the Gov'ment; but which was primarily a mighty wall of free men standing between the goddamned yellow-bellies and Lyn.

H. A. C. EVANS

David flicked the ash from his cigarette over the éclairs and the silly iced buns on the plate before him. It seemed to him a very necessary gesture. At the next table an obvious Rugger player was guffawing with a pimply undergraduette. Over in a corner a young don and an elderly don were simpering over some privy pedantic obscenity. A waitress put "Night and Day" on the gramophone . . . He went out and the vulgarity of the Corn hit him like a blow in the face; bicycles, buses, Marks and Spencers. There was even something wrong with the sunset, it glared behind Carfax like the backcloth of some provincial musical comedy. He shuddered as he passed the Post Office with its smell of stale ink and eternal brown paper parcels. Tom reared up before him, phallic but strangely un-urgent . . . David stopped dead in his tracks and fought with his nausea. There was nothing else for it—he would have to find Nigel and make his position clear. He would go at once and say all, everything that had to be said. He could not, he would not go on like this.

ZOE JOHNSON

"Aunt Grace disdains suicide and is unlikely to attract a thunderbolt," remarked Herbert on entering. "Natural decay, though slower, is more to be relied upon."

"You are in time for breakfast, Herbert," observed Aunt Grace. "I hope your desire for ostentation will not convulse the domestic arrangements."

"For which I am entirely responsible," said his wife; "Aunt Grace need not tremble at your unwonted punctuality."

"Aunt Grace is deceitful," said Frederick; "she is far less deaf than she leads us to suppose."

"Our parents should be more diplomatic; they should not allow us to outdo them in tact," replied Penelope.

"I have arranged a surprise for Frederick's twelfth birthday," said Herbert.

"One which I shall survive, I trust," said Frederick.

"Don't flatter yourself that father is interested in *your* non-survival," said his sister. "Blood is thicker than water, which is why sons run away to sea."

"We are all in excellent spirits today," said Miss Grunch, speaking with her mouth full, which was not overlooked. "I have decided that when Penelope goes to school, half my present salary will be ample."

"To-day Frederick is to wheel me to my solicitors," announced Aunt Grace.

DAVID HICKS

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SUDAN Government. The Research Division of the Department of Agriculture and Forests requires a Plant Physiologist, age 23-40, for Service in the Sudan. Candidates should have an Hons. Degree in Botany with specialization in plant or crop physiology and research exp. Appointment will be on Long Term Contract, salary scale will be in the Scale £E480 to £E1,080, and starting rate will be between £E480 and £E660 according to age, qualifics., and exp. Subject to completion of two years' probation the contractual period envisaged is seven years, on completion of which candidate qualifies for gratuity of £E1,500. This gratuity is also payable on suppression of post or replacement by Sudanese before completion of contractual period. Special gratuities are granted for discharge on medical grounds before completion of contractual period. A cost of living allowance which at present is at the rate of 45% of salary with a max. of £E225 p.a. is payable. An outfit allowance of £E60 if starting rate does not exceed £E600 is payable on appointment. There is at present no income tax in the Sudan. Free passage on appointment. Strict medical examination. (£E1 = £1 0s. 6*d*.). Further information and applic. forms may be obtained from The Sudan Agent in London, Wellington House, Buckingham Gate, S.W.1. Please mark envelope "Plant Physiologist."

IBADAN College, Nigeria: Registrar. Ibadan College is being established as one of 2 new university colleges in West Africa. Applics. are invited for post of Registrar. Sal. between £1,000 and £1,500 p.a. according to qualifics. Exp. in university administration or teaching essential. Applics. (in triplicate), giving full particulars of qualifics. and names of 3 refs., should be addressed before Nov. 1 to Secretary, Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies, from whom further partics. may be obtained.

LEEDS College of Art. Principal, E. E. Pullee, A.R.C.A. Applics. invited for post of full-time teacher of Sculpture in the School of Sculpture and Pottery. Candidates should be Associates of the Royal College of Art or hold an equiv. qualification. A knowledge of pottery will be an advantage. Salary scale: Men, £300-£15-£525. Women, £270-£12-£420. Additions for degree or equivalent qualifics. and approved training. Previous teaching and war service and professional exp. will be taken into account in determining commencing salary. Forms of application, which should be returned as soon as possible, and further partics. may be obtained by forwarding a stamped add. foolscap envelope to Director of Education, Education Offices, Leeds, 1.

B.B.C. invites applics. for post of Programme Assistant in Overseas News Dept. Work will consist mainly of preparation of scripts for Radio News Reel. Candidates should have writing ability, a "news-sense" and an up-to-date knowledge of current affairs. The successful candidate must be prepared to wk. morning, afternoon or evening on shift. Sal. on scale rising by increments of £40 to max. £890 p.a. Detailed applics. to Appointments Officer, Broadcasting House, W.1, marked "Radio News Reel," within 7 days. For acknowledgment enclose s.a.e.

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L.C.C. Reqd. at Shirley Residential School, Wickham Rd. Shirley, Croydon, a temporary Organiser of Training Courses for Nursery Students to prepare students for the National Nursery Examination Board's certific. School will accommodate 20 students for an 8 wks. course. Person appointed must have had Nursery School Training and exp. in Nursery School wk. Burnham (Technical) scale sal. plus a special responsibility allowance of £80 p.a. Emoluments of board, lodging, washing and medical attendance in consideration of supervisory duties outside the normal hours of training. Applic. forms (s.a.e. necessary), from Educ. Officer (S.S.5), County Hall, S.E.1, returnable by Nov. 10, 1947. (3115.)

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